# DEBATES THAT MADE HISTORY

By J. J. HALEY

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# DEBATES THAT MADE HISTORY

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The Story of

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL'S DEBATES

with

Rev. John Walker, Rev. W. L. McCalla, Mr. Robert Owen,
Bishop Purcell and Rev. Nathan L. Rice.

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By J. J. HALEY

Author of "Makers and Moulders of the Reformation Movement."

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OFFERED BY THE
AUTHOR AND PUBLISHERS
AS A
MEMORIAL AND APPRECIATION
OF
THOSE VALIANT CHRISTIAN LEADERS OF YESTERDAY
WHO CONTENDED EARNESTLY WITH EACH OTHER
IN
QUEST OF THE TRUTH
AND AS A
SERVICE TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF TODAY
AND
ESPECIALLY TO THE YOUNGER MINISTERS
UPON WHOSE SHOULDERS HAS FALLEN
THE MANTLE OF CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP
AT ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL PERIODS
OF CHRISTENDOM

# HISTORIC BACKGROUND

THIS book is an analytic story of five religious debates held in Ohio and Kentucky about a century ago. They traverse a wide range of topics and cover practically all the disputed points between the different Protestant bodies, the contentions between materialism and Christianity and the divergent issues between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. The century that has elapsed since they agitated the religious folk has seen many changes in religious thought. The point of view has shifted from the ecclesiastical and philosophical to the scientific and social. New sects have been born and grown to strength and others have risen only to die. The Christian horizons have been enlarged from township scope to world inclusions, but the principles of these debates have not been outgrown nor become obsolete.

It is believed that these discussions have a mission to this age of rather loose religious thinking and statement. Whatever could be said, pro and con, on the contested ideas was stated by men of learning, character, spirituality and forensic ability. These debates commanded the attention of the leaders of their day both in the religious and political spheres. They strengthened the love of the truth and fired the passion to place Church and State on foundations in which no flaws could be found, which would stand the utmost hammering of their bitterest foes.

They also hastened rather than retarded Christian union. After they were over men understood Christianity better than before and realized that with all their seeming differences they were closer together than had been supposed. The disputants found themselves able, not only to speak of each other with respect, but between some of the protagonists in these historic contests, there grew up a genuine personal friendship.

These learned arguments quickened interest in religion in general. They kindled a new zeal for spiritual things. Tidal waves of evangelism rose again and again, and swept many thousands into the kingdom of God. Everybody took a fresh interest in the Bible and, at no other period of our history, have men been so familiar with the Divine Scriptures. Church members carried the New Testament in their pockets and were ever ready to proclaim and defend its doctrines. Multitudes ceased to be negative and neutral and became positive and aggressive confessors of the faith.

Religion in America, especially in the South and Central West, was at that time, almost entirely of the emotional type. The Written Word was a dead letter or was used by the masses like a talisman or a dream book. People were taught to wait for "experiences" that would revolutionize their spiritual natures in a moment as evidence of true conversion. They must see sights, dream dreams, be warned by signs or portents. The religious phenomena of the times are worthy of deep study but it can be very confidently affirmed that if religion had not somehow obtained a firm footing in reason, as well as in feeling, superstition, social anarchy, and, eventually, atheism would have swept the people into the vortex of despair and pessimism. It was the right moment, therefore, for something to come which would put personal religion on the basis of fact and objective revelation, and give the people intelligent interest in the spiritual life and impel them to love God with the mind as well as with the heart.

Perhaps the debate which dealt with the most fundamental and far reaching questions was that with Mr. Owen. It was a very large factor in saving the Mississippi Valley from materialistic communism with all the evils it would have released from the bottomless pit of lust, greed, selfishness and ambition upon that rich and fair section.

When Mr. Owen appeared in America and challenged the ministers to defend their views in public debate, there were already in existence a number of communities which practiced free love and advocated that the builders of society go

"back to nature" for foundation and guidance. This had been heeded to the extent that in some localities according to report, the sexes bathed together unclothed in public places. Such towns as "Memnona," "New Harmony," and "Modern Times," all affecting to cure the poverty, unhappiness, and unrest of mankind by the abolition of all kinds of restraint, had sprung up in the Ohio Valley. "New Harmony" was Robert Owen's experiment and attracted the attention, if indeed not the adherence also, of many of the intellectuals of that day. "Memnona" was described in a story called "Esperanza" which means Land of Hope. The book was said to be a very bold defense of free love. "Modern Times" was a small community at Tuscarawas, Ohio. The social basis of the village was expressed in the phrase "individual sovereignty." In his "Autobiography, Memory and Experiences," Vol. 1, page 266, Daniel Moncure Conway, the celebrated newspaper correspondent, describes marriage in the village of "Modern Times" as follows:

> The arrangements of marriage were left entirely to the individual men and women. They could be married formally or otherwise, live in the same or separate houses, and have their relation known or unknown. The relation could be dissolved at pleasure without any formulas. Certain customs had grown out of this absence of marriage laws. Privacy was general; it was not polite to enquire who might be the father of a newly born child, or who was the husband or wife of any one. Those who stood in the relation of husband or wife wore upon the finger a red thread; so long as that badge was visible the person was understood to be married. If it disappeared the marriage was at an end.

In addition to the individualistic and free love aspects of these communities they were strongly atheistic and their doctrines poisoned many of the leaders of the day. The times called for such debates and they came. And, though they did not at once nor wholly destroy the errors and evils that called them forth, they were a large, if not the largest, influence in saving the education and ideals of the growing West to the religion of Jesus Christ.

These debates made history, not because the peculiar tenets or claims of one party were advanced as against another, but because the doctrines and principles of real Apostolic Christianity were reasserted and made vital in the young Republic which was neither far enough away from the old order of Europe, nor clear enough in its own definitions, nor yet sufficiently strong in its achievements to be perfectly secure. It was still pioneering, especially in religion, and these debates of masterful men made the creative power of Apostolic Christianity a major force in the thinking of the people and put the torch of truth into their hands.

The light is still burning and the people are going forward in the long and checkered march of progress. But it has come to pass that we are in the welter of world confusion. Gross materialism threatens the life of the nations. Hence there is a new service for these debates. There is dense ignorance of the Scriptures. A new order is struggling to be born. We are pioneering again—this time on a vaster scale.

All who read this story of those celebrated debates will find values worth their time and labor, for they set forth in strong firm lines the old, eternal principles that guide souls aright, and that will still abide when the mountains are worn down with age and men have found the quest of all their debates in the answer of the Infinite.

B. A. Abbott.

Editor of *The Christian-Evangelist.*

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# CHAPTER I

## ALEXANDER CAMPBELL AS A DEBATER

*The Ethics of Religious Controversy a Hundred Years Ago.*

Campbell was decidedly the fairest man in debate I ever saw, as fair as you can possibly conceive. He never fought for victory, like Dr. Johnson. He seemed to be always fighting for the truth, or what he believed to be the truth. In this he differed from other men. He never misrepresented his case nor that of his opponent; never tried to hide a weak point; never quibbled. He would have made a very poor lawyer, in the ordinary understanding of the term lawyer. Like his great friend, Henry Clay, he excelled in the clear statement of the case at issue. No dodging with him. He come right out fairly and squarely. He was what used to be called, in good old times, "flat-footed." Rather than force a victory by underhand or ignoble means, he preferred to encounter defeat. But whenever he fell, he fell like the Cavalier Bayard, with honor and a clear conscience.

—*Bishop Purcell.*

# CHAPTER I

## ALEXANDER CAMPBELL AS A DEBATER

THEOLOGICAL polemics was as unpopular a hundred years ago, amongst the better type of evangelical Christians, as it is today. The attitude of the mystic, the pietist, and of practical people, who put the supreme emphasis of religion upon ethics, towards religious war, or theological combat, more properly speaking, has always been that of emphatic disapproval. Spirituality and morality are not debatable questions. Controversial religion is the interpretation of religion in terms of the intellect, and quickly degenerates into rationalism on the one hand or legalism on the other. The religion of Jesus Christ does not place its fundamental accent on dogma, creed, ritual, rite, ceremony, orders of ministry, or forms of organization; it is towards these externalisms in theology and ecclesiology that religious disputes invariably gravitate. This causes people to fight over forms and phrases, prepositions and propositions in sublime forgetfulness of the meaning of the religious life, of which forms and phrases are but the symbols. This divine religion which originated in the personality of Jesus of Nazareth, placed its sovereign impress and accent on life, life that found expression in conduct, character, and service. According to this conception of the Christian religion the Gospel needed to be proclaimed and practiced, not debated.

This, in brief, is substantially the attitude towards religious controversy occupied by both Thomas and Alexander Campbell, when they commenced their work in Western Pennsylvania 110 years ago. In the year 1820, ten years later, much against his inclinations, and just as much against his convictions he was persuaded to engage in a "dispute," as it was then called, with the Rev. John Walker, a combative minister

of the Seceder denomination of Presbyterians. Mr. Campbell's easy triumph over his opponent in this initial effort in the new field, his masterly vindication of his position in the eyes of all but the most blinded partisans, the tremendous sensation produced by the polemic genius of this new apostle of religious leadership, the marked enhancement of his reputation as thinker, speaker and reformer, could hardly fail to suggest to others, and to his own inner consciousness that he had found himself in a new field of influence and power, in the work to which he had set his hand. The most notable conversion resulting from that discussion with Mr. Walker was the disputant who had been dragged into it against his will, and almost against his principles, who became profoundly and movingly convinced, not only of the legitimacy and utility of the controversial method, but of its absolute necessity, under the circumstances, as effective propaganda, in the interest of the current Reformation, of which he was the acknowledged leader. The demonstration began its career of fruitage at once.

This first effort in the field of oral controversy captured the Baptist community, horse, foot, and dragoon. It was overwhelmed with joy at the able, cogent, and most illuminating defense and vindication of Baptist principles and practices. Amongst other results of this victory over his Presbyterian opponent, was an opportunity to visit Kentucky three years later, where he found a large body of intelligent and progressive Baptists. He preached to great audiences in many towns, who listened with rapt and appreciative attention and admiration to the great, new prophet and preacher, who had so suddenly appeared in their midst. During this first invasion of the dark and bloody ground, brought about by a public discussion in Ohio, he secured 5,000 new readers for his paper, the *Christian Baptist,* including the most enlightened preachers and the best educated laymen in the Baptist Israel of that section of the country. Hundreds of these, including Raccoon John Smith, and thousands of others, afterwards

came into the Reformation. This first effort to extend his horizon, and to follow his star of empire towards the West, brought to Mr. Campbell's attention the similar revolution of Barton W. Stone, which after ten or twelve years of mutual acquaintanceship, fellowship and negotiation, gave to the world the first exhibiton of the practice of Christian Union, according to the Declaration and Address by Thomas Campbell.

If a tree is to be known by its fruit, according to the pragmatic philosophy of Jesus, this was an encouraging demonstration of the virtue of debating the truth as a means of its rapid and effective propagation. Years later when Mr. Campbell's theory of the utility of controversy had been amply justified by results, he published an editorial in the *Millennial Harbinger* in which he gives his reasons for his change of mind in relation to the public discussion of religious questions. He was quite free, of course, to admit the great evils that flowed from the abuses of controversy and the controversial spirit. The old darky's traditional announcement of his readiness for "spute" as he emerged from the waters of immersion, was a dead give-away of the environment from which he had received his polemic baptism. Half baked theological Ephraims sprang into the arena, brandishing their crude sectarian clubs, as degenerate in logic as they were in life, ready and more than willing to prove themselves orthodox by apostolic blow and knocks, or in any other way that came most readily to hand. Negroes even, and a type of white men of only a slightly higher species of the *genus homo,* as far as gray matter and culture were concerned, met at blacksmith shops, country stores and churches at the cross roads to discuss baptism, creeds, hereditary total depravity, and the abstract influence of the Holy Spirit in conversion and sanctification, reminding one of a later historic episode in the field of American politics, in which the same class of men debated free silver and the doctrine of "sixteen to one," believing in the bottom of their dear precious souls that the new dollar would be absolutely free and that we would have sixteen dollars where we had

one before! Thus when controversy simmered down from the masters to the masses and began to infiltrate their poor thin souls with its stains and colors, ignorance was not sensibly diminished; dogmatism, which Douglas Jerrold said was puppyism come to maturity, partisan prejudice, sectarianism, fanaticism, bigotry and bitterness, all continued to flourish like a green bay tree. Mr. Campbell was aware of all this. He deplored this unseemly prostitution and degradation of the sacred function of public debate, which, in the hands of competent men, is one of the best means of publicity, and the vindication of truth and righteousness.

Notwithstanding the glaring ugliness of this adverse side of the picture, the editor of the *Harbinger* did not hesitate to declare as the thesis of the editorial, to which reference has already been made, that there could be no progress and no improvement without controversy. This is plain enough when attention has once been called to the fact. Progress calls for growth, growth necessitates change, change brings innovation, either by the creation of new things, or the modification of old ones.

All innovations and suggested improvements excite opposition and opposition precipitates controversy. All who love truth conceive it to be their duty to oppose error, and opposition to error is a declaration of war against it. The historic argument employed is equally conclusive. It arrays the great sacramental host of patriarchs, prophets, poets, sacred philosophers, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and even the Master himself, as fighters in the holy war, the mighty crusade against ignorance, error, sin and death. He begins with Moses, the master mind of the race, who long and valiantly contended with the Egyptian Magi. He overcame Jannes and Jambres in the wilderness. Elijah encountered the prophest of Baal. Job long debated with the princes of Edom. The Jewish prophets and the idolatrous kings of Israel waged a long and arduous controversy. John the Harbinger, and the scribes and Pharisees met in mental and moral conflict. Jesus

and the Rabbis and the priesthood long debated. The Apostles and the Sanhedrin; the evangelist and the doctors of divinity; Paul and the skeptics engaged in many a conflict; and even Michael fought in "wordy debate" with the devil about the body of Moses; yet who was more meek than Moses; more zealous for God than Elijah; more patient than Job; more devout than Paul; more benevolent than John?

In later crises of the Kingdom, when it became necessary to make war to end war, our valiant defender of the rights of controversy, swings down the historic line from the Apostle John to Martin Luther, and the controversial weapon again prevails.

The controversy begun by Luther, not only maimed the power of the Roman Heirarchy, but also impaired the arm of political despotism. The *crown* as well as the *mitre,* was jeopardized and desecrated by his Herculean pen. From the controversy about the *rights* of *Christians* arose the controversy about the *rights* of *men.* Every blow inflicted upon ecclesiastical despotism was felt by the political tyrants. Religious controversy has enlightened the world. It gave new vigor to the mind, and the era of the Reformation was the era of the revival of literature. It has enlightened men upon all subjects—in all the arts and sciences—in all things, philosophic, literary, moral, political. It was the tongue and pen of controversy which developed the true solar system—laid the foundation of the American revolution—abolished the slave trade—and which has so far disenthralled the human mind from the shackles of superstition. Locke, Sidney, Milton, and Newton, were all controversialists and reformers, philosophers, literary, religious and political. Truth and liberty, both religious and political, are the first fruits of well directed controversy. Peace and eternal bliss will be the "harvest home." Let the opponents of controversy, or they who *controvert controversy,* remember that had there been no controversy, neither the Jewish nor the Christian religion could have ever been established; nor had it ceased could the Reformation have ever been achieved. It has been the parent of almost all the social blessings which we enjoy.

If Mr. Campbell had been writing a few years later, he might have extended the era of his observations to the political field in the successive revolutions that culminated in the American constitution, and the democratic experiment that fol-

lowed in the history of the American people. It was the historic clash between the conflicting political concepts of Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton, embodied and compromised in the constitution, and about as reconcilable as "perdition and the powder house," that finally set the combustibles off in the conflagration of a great civil war. We think of those mighty intellectual conflicts between such giants of the forum as Webster and Hayne, Clay and Calhoun, John Quincy Adams and Patrick Henry, aristocratic John Randolph, descendant of Pocahontas, and the Pennsylvania blacksmith, who when Randolph sneeringly asked: "What did the honorable member do with this leather apron when he came to Congress?" answered in a piece of democratic repartee, seldom equalled, "I cut it up to make moccasins for the descendants of Pocahontas."

We think also, and particularly of the most significant and decisive of the political controversies of history, those chain-lightning debates in Illinois between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas, that resulted in Mr. Lincoln's election to the presidency of the United States; the ultimate conversion of the whole world to Mr. Lincoln's way of thinking, including his masterly opponent, "The Little Giant," who after his inauguration became one of his warmest, and most devoted and helpful friends.

Yes, of the inevitableness and, therefore, the allowability of controversy at certain stages of human evolution and in particular junctures of progressive experience, there can be no reasonable doubt. When the man and the moment come together, as they always do when a great providential task is to be achieved, something happens. In the early years of the 19th century the moment arrived, and there God brought in his man, and something did happen, the truth had found a new champion, and a new opportunity. This new master in Israel, a Coryphaeus in controversial ability, a monarch of all he surveyed in the realm of religious knowledge and philosophy, was found insisting that the fundamental questions of religion and civilization, being the problems of life and death, should

be fearlessly and honestly investigated, ventilated, debated, threshed out, sifted and held up to the light and the public gaze till the church was made safe for spiritual democracy and ethical sovereignty. Alexander Campbell was a man of great capacity and personality in many directions. He was great in the pulpit, great in the professor's chair, great on the tripod, great on the lecture platform, great in after-dinner monologues in family circles, where some of his most brilliant talks were made; but in nothing did he reach up to such heights of sheer mastership as he did in those intellectual tournaments called debates. His fine mental endowments, his scholarly equipment, his great reach of mind, the phenomenal quickness and nimbleness of his faculties, his affluent and inexhaustible wealth of classic and common English, the cumulative resources of facts and data, always at hand, made him easily the first reasoner and the greatest debater of his time. He was a dialectic genius of the first water.

These five debates we are about to study are the greatest in the English language, perhaps the greatest in any language, and it is no exaggeration of the situation to say that we owe the monumental character of these discussions more to the sage of Bethany than to any one of his five opponents, or all of them put together. If the historic example of dignity, courtesy and fairness, set by him, had been followed by others who took up the gauntlet in the arena of polemic discussion, the alleged evils of controversy would have been negligible. He did not regard debating and fighting as equivalent terms. On the contrary a debate from his point of view was a friendly and brotherly exchange and interchange of ideas with a single end in view, viz.: the elicitation, exposition, and vindication of truth and righteousness. His aim was to speak the truth in love, and to bring before a distracted world and a divided church, the regenerating and unifying principles of the more excellent way so plainly and urgently revealed in the word of God. How well he succeeded, we shall see as we proceed with the analysis and interpretation of these five of the world's greatest debates.

## CHAPTER II

## FIRST DEBATE OF THE BIG FIVE: BAPTISM

*Between Alexander Campbell and the Rev. John Walker at Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, June* 19 *and* 20, 1820. *Beginning of the War against Sectarian Creeds and Divisions.*

When Alexander Campbell was urged in the spring of 1820, to engage in a public oral debate with Mr. Walker, on the question of Baptism, he at first declined to consent, "not regarding," as he said, "public debates" to be "the proper method of proceeding in contending for the faith once delivered to the saints." He had adopted this conclusion however, more from deference to his father's feelings on the subject, than from his own matured convictions of expediency or from his natural temperament.

—*Richardson's Memoirs of Alexander Campbell.*

## CHAPTER II

### FIRST DEBATE OF THE BIG FIVE: BAPTISM

IT seemed like the irony of fate that the first great mill on baptism, in the 19th century, should be pulled off in a Quaker community! Dr. Richardson, in his Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, gives us a few felicitous touches of the physical and rural environment of the locality in which the first great debate was held:

> The place selected was Mt. Pleasant, O., a village some 23 miles distant from Mr. Campbell's residence, situated in the midst of a very beautiful and fertile country, gently undulating and greatly improved by the careful culture and industry characteristic of the Quaker farmers who constituted a large portion of the surrounding population. Comfortable dwellings, rich fields of clover, substantial fences, and thrifty orchards greeted the eye on every side, with here and there luxuriant groves, or smaller clumps of stately forest trees. This region was quite thickly settled, and as considerable interest in the subject had been already created, and public polemical discussions were at this time quite a novelty, a large and attentive assembly was in attendance.

The rest of the community was, perhaps, about equally divided between Baptists and Seceder Presbyterians. Both parties were Calvinistic in theology and intensely dogmatic in all their religious attitudes. The Secession denomination to which both of the Campbells had belonged, was the most fiercely intolerant and belligerent of all the narrow-minded sects in the Christendom of that day. Thomas Campbell tells of a Seceder cleric, a brother minister of his at the time, who said to his congregation, "I beseech you my brethren to hate all other denominations, especially the Catholics."

Ecclesiastical secederism was the quintessence of Orangeism in the north of Ireland, where the hymn of hate is still sung to as many variations as it was a hundred years ago. It was

out of this furnace of sectarian gall, and red handed partizan hostility that the Campbells escaped when they came to the United States, in the first decade of the 19th century. And, they were not long in finding out that they had jumped from the frying pan into the fire, and that the fire eating seceder was as strongly entrenched in the hills of Western Pennsylvania, and the Western reserve of Ohio as he had been in the political and theological wars on the other side of the Atlantic.

The moderator, chosen by Mr. Walker, was a secession divine who showed but one conspicuous quality before the debate began, during the time of its continuance, and after its close, and that was the most intense and bitter hostility to Mr. Campbell. The reader will have no difficulty in understanding that these seceders "had it in" for the Campbells on at least three counts. First: these reformers, so called, had the effrontery and the audacity to try to reform the Cattery at Kilkenny, that is, to bring about peace, unity and harmony among the quarrelsome secession-immaculates and infallibles. Second: they left the Seceder denomination when they found it beyond redemption; and, third: they went over to the vulgar Baptists on the subject of baptism. These were unpardonable offenses. These counts made up an indictment that meant war to the knife against Alexander Campbell and his current reformation.

In addition to these general grounds of antagonism, a local clash in the community of Mt. Pleasant brought things to a head. A successful protracted meeting in the Baptist church resulted in the immersion of a goodly number of persons, some of them seceders, who had been sprinkled in infancy. This, although it was a water proposition, put the fat in the fire, and soon there was a blaze in the Presbyterian camp.

The Rev. John Walker, pastor of the village secession church, delivered a series of sermons in defense of infant baptism, and in opposition to immersion, which he declared to be without Scripture warrant. There was a Baptist "Chile a

takin' notes an' faith he didn't print 'em," but he called the speaker down on a garbled and twisted quotation from one of his authorities. This led to a personal dispute and a peremptory challenge from Rev. Walker to debate the points at issue. Alexander Campbell was chosen to represent the Baptists, although at that time he had no ecclesiastical connection or association with any existing religious party, including the Baptists. Both he and his father had been immersed by a Baptist minister, and this fact had brought them into friendly relations with leading Baptists in the neighborhood, who regarded them as allies in the war against affusion as a substitute for immersion and infant rantism in place of believers' baptism required by the New Testament. The Calvinistic Baptists of the period—iron jackets and hard shells for the most part—were little more to the fancy of Rev. John Walker's opponent in that discussion at Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, than Calvinistic Seceder Presbyterians. It was easier to make converts from Baptists to "the ancient order of things" than from paedobaptists, on account of agreement on the points to be discussed, and many were made; but the objective of the great drive was not to clear the field for Baptist occupation. It was a justifiable and fitting opportunism in the mind of Mr. Campbell: viz., a capital chance to represent the truth on the subject of baptism, and to open the way for the presentation of larger and more vital and fundamental truths, which he was anxious for the religious world of his time to hear.

And so the eventful 19th of June, 1820, arrived and all things were ready for the "dispute" to begin. And there were the peaceful, and spiritual, and ethical Quakers of the vicinity, who had no forms to fight over; no material sacraments that externalized and carnalized religion out of all semblance to the divine original, there they were: "Friends" to God and man, who did not believe in war neither carnal nor theological. Did any of them attend the debate? History is silent on the subject: it is probable, however, that they remained at home,

quietly attending to their business, and waiting for the storm in the village to blow over. The battle went on notwithstanding this silent protest against its ravages; and what was of even greater significance, the spirituality of the Quaker, and his belief in a religion of life and character, in the union of all who love in the service of all who suffer, found a mighty champion in one of the disputants, at least, in that theological scrap. It was the fundamental aim of the Reformation proposed by Thomas Campbell, and seconded by his gifted son Alexander, to put an end to strife and controversy over forms, doctrines, and theological speculations. It was the conviction of these two men that if people would adopt the Bible as the only standard of religious truth, and accept the meaning of its words as determined simply by the rules of language, its true sense would be sufficiently obvious, and there would be universal agreement in relation to the things which it revealed. It was their hope that religious dissensions might be thus brought to a close, and that there would be thenceforward no occasion whatever for controversy, except with those who denied the divine authority of the Bible.

Rev. John Walker was in no sense a worthy opponent of Alexander Campbell, but his acceptance in that capacity was the best that could be done under the circumstances. He took the affirmative on the subject of infant baptism, made the first speech, of course, and it was a *sui generis* performance. It betrays a strangely rudimental conception of the conduct of a public debate. Its phenomenal brevity and its destitution of everything in the shape of argument, interpretation, explanation, or illustration, was absolutely stunning. It is just 124 words in length, consists of one sentence, printed in twelve lines of brevier type, across the page of a book of ordinary size, and required not more than two minutes of the reverend gentleman's time to deliver. It is the shortest historic speech on record unless it is Sydney Smith's celebrated charity sermon, where he quotes the text, "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord," and then added: "If you like the security

down with the dust." Smith's little speech was a great success, it brought the dust; but the warmest of Mr. Walker's friends could hardly have pronounced his little quip a hit, not even in raising dust! But here is Mr. Walker's little speech in full:

> My friends, I don't intend to speak long at one time, perhaps not more than five or ten minutes, and will therefore come to the point at once: I maintain that baptism came in the room of circumcision, that the covenant on which the Jewish church was built, and to which circumcision is the seal, is the same with the covenant on which the Christian church is built, and to which baptism is the seal; that the Jews and the Christians are the same body politic, under the same lawgiver and husband; hence the Jews were called the congregation of the Lord; and the Bridegroom of the church says "My love" "my undefiled one," consequently the infants of believers have a right to baptism.

One "wee" citation from Scripture, *six words* from the old Jewish love-song, known as "the song of songs" which has no more to do with the church of Jesus Christ than it has with the man in the moon. This spiritualizing and mystifying absurdity was a favorite method of sectarian interpretation in those days.

The little assumption that tried to construct a bridge for infant baptism on the two pillars of baptism in the room of circumcision, and the identity of the covenants, furnished only a breakfast spell for Mr. C. to demolish. He pointed out, at once, the physical and moral impossibility of the material and national rite of circumcision, having any relation whatever to Christianity and the Christian church established by Christ and the Apostles. He showed that the circumcision argument was a desperate makeshift, an after thought, a groundless assumption, and that Paedobaptists themselves did not put baptism in the room of circumscision, as they did not confine it to males only, and extend it to servants as well as children, perform it on the 8th day, or make it the identifying badge of nationality in a state commonwealth.

In referring to the glaring points of dissimilarity between

the two institutions, Mr. C. particularized the fact that circumcision required only carnal descent from Abraham, or covenant relation to Abraham; but that baptism demanded faith in Christ as its indispensable prerequisite: and that baptism differed from circumcision in the nature of the blessings it conveyed, which were spiritual and not temporal. When Mr. Walker returned to this point, instead of making an effort to gather up the shattered fragments of his broken pillar, he contented himself with merely repeating the assertion in the same words, making no attempt to give Scripture proof or evidence of any kind.

The next point was the identity of the covenants, which paedobaptists regarded as the stronghold of infant baptism. The two covenants were the same, the carnal, temporal, and national covenant of the Jewish dispensation, was identical with the spiritual and moral covenant made and ratified in Christ under the new economy of the Holy Spirit and, therefore, as infants were included in the first they have the right of inclusion in the second. This argument, if more complicated and tortuous, is, if possible, less conclusive than the one on circumcision. Mr. Campbell had no trouble in demonstrating from two inspired writers, Jeremiah the prophet, and the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, that the two covenants were *contrasted* in their provisions, and diametrical opposites in all of their essential characteristics. The Hebrew writer speaks of the *new* and *better* covenant which had been enacted upon better promises. These better promises were promises of eternal salvation beginning in time, the basic principles of the better covenant over against the promises of temporal preservation in the old. The old covenant being the basis of a political commonwealth, was full of unconscious infants and wicked men, but the new and better covenant under Christ had only members of whom it was said: "They shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen and every man his brother, saying 'know the Lord;' for all shall know me from the least to the greatest of them." This neces-

sarily excludes infants. As Mr. Walker used considerable repetition, Dr. Richardson tells us, and often recurred to his argument on the covenants without considering the refutation given by Mr. Campbell, the latter employed a portion of his time in directing the attention of his audience to some of the general principles of the Reformation he was laboring to establish: which if admitted, must sweep away the entire foundation of Mr. Walker's system. Some of these were: the supreme authority of Scripture, and the necessity of a positive command for every religious institution, which in no case could be based upon mere reasoning or upon human tradition. When the two chief pillars of the bridge of infant baptism, had been razed to the ground, and pulverized, Mr. Walker appealed to the four cases of household baptism mentioned in the New Testament, as evidence that infants were baptized in apostolic times. The ground was cut from beneath this appeal by a simple reference to the inspired record: "All the house of Cornelius *feared* God and received the Holy Spirit: Lydia's household were *comforted as brethren.* The word of the Lord *was spoken to all* in the jailer's house and they *all rejoiced believing in God. All* the house of Crispus *believed* on the Lord, and all in the house of Stephanus are said to have addicted themselves *to the ministry of the Saints.* Now, if these things are affirmed of *all* the baptized will not apply to infants, then it is plain there were no infants baptized in those houses."

The last appeal of the Seceder champion on this proposition was to the antiquity of the practice. He referred to the practice of infant baptism in the early church. Mr. Campbell admitted that both infant baptism and infant sprinkling were ancient practices, but the mere antiquity of an institution did not prove it to be right, since many things introduced in the first and second centuries were known to be corruptions. The first of the church fathers to mention infant baptism, was Tertullian who flourished from A. D. 194 to 216, and is ranked among the writers of the third century. And he refers

to the institution with criticism and strong disapproval, and says of it, along with other things of similar nature: "If you demand a law for these practices taken from the Scriptures, *we cannot find one there,* but we must answer that it is *tradition* that has established them, *custom* that has authorized them, and *faith* that has made them to be observed." Thus the historic line falls 200 years short of apostolic ground and so leaves the foot of Mr. Walker's fourth pillar in the mud and sand of human tradition.

In the afternoon of the second day when the debate on the "mode" or action of baptism was to have been commenced, Mr. Campbell and the congregation had their breath taken away when Moderator Findley proposed, at the instance of Mr. Walker, that farther discussion be limited to one speech on each side! It was hardly to be expected that the challenger and his most rabid official partizan, who had proposed that the discussion should go on from day to day till all points had been fully discussed should exhibit the white feather and call for so cheap an armistice, which the public was bound to construe as a transparent acknowledgment of defeat, or a vote of a want of confidence in the paedobaptist champion. Mr. Campbell consented to close with two speeches on each side, on the ground that if it was sufficient for them, it was quite satisfactory to him. As this phase of the baptismal problem is more ably and exhaustively treated in the debate with McCalla three years later, and too much repetition must be avoided in these sketches and tediousness altogether eliminated, if possible, we will summarize arguments on the "mode" when we reach the contest with Seceder McCalla, which will be in the next two articles of the present series.

## CHAPTER III

## THE SECOND DEBATE: THE WAR AGAINST SECTARIANISM AND DISUNION

*The Debate with Rev. Wm. McCalla in Washington, Mason County, Kentucky, October* 15-22, 1823.

Washington, Ky.

My dear Margaret: Through the mercy and kindness of our heavenly Father we have arrived in safety and in health at the ground of debate. * * * This is a healthy and fine country, and everything is cheerful and animating. I have no news relative to the debate. Great expectations on all sides and much zeal. Too much party spirit. I hope and pray that the Lord will enable me to speak as I ought to speak, and cause the truth to be glorified.

—*From a letter of A. Campbell to his wife on the eve of the Campbell-McCalla debate.*

# CHAPTER III

## THE SECOND DEBATE: THE WAR AGAINST SECTARIANISM AND DISUNION

THE discussion with the Rev. John Walker in Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, in the summer of 1820, noticed in the previous chapter, was the *real beginning* of the Reformation under the leadership of Alexander Campbell. The idea that this movement began in 1809 with the organization of the Christian Association in Washington, Pa., and the publication of the Declaration and Address by Thomas Campbell, is one of those historic mistakes, which it is difficult to explain, in view of the actual facts of the case. The conception of a great constructive movement within the church looking to its reformation, the correction of abuses, and the union of Christians upon the one foundation laid in Zion, did not enter into the mind of Alexander Cambpell till the dynamic thrust and shock of a great debate, aroused him to a consciousness of his power to reach and convince the public. Here is an illuminating passage, which I accidentally discovered in the last chapter of the Christian Baptist, which will be news to the Disciples of Christ generally, as it was to me:

> Having been educated as Presbyterian clergymen generally are, and looking forward to the ministry, as both an honorable and useful calling, all my expectations and prospects in future life were at the age of 21, identified with the office of the ministry. But scarcely had I begun to make sermons, when I discovered that the religion of the New Testament was one thing, and that of any sect which I knew was another. I could not proceed. An unsuccessful effort by my father to reform the Presbytery and Synod to which he belonged, made me despair of reformation. I gave it up as a hopeless effort; but did not give up speaking in public assemblies upon the great articles of Christian faith and practice, in the hope, the humble hope, of erecting a single congregation with which I

could enjoy the social institutions. I had not the remotest idea of being able to do more than this; and, therefore, I betook myself to the occupation of a farmer, and for a number of years attended to this profession as a means of subsistence, and labored every Lord's day to separate the truth from the traditions of man, and to persuade men to give up their fables for the truth—with but little success.

He then goes on to speak of the debate with Walker, and adds:

It was not until after I discovered the effects of that discussion that I began to hope that something might be done to rouse this generation from its supineness and spiritual lethargy.

So the historic union movement of the 19th century, which has done so much to make spiritual world history, actually was originated and initiated in a debate, led by a farmer, who had been educated for the ministry!

Another effect of this discovery was the publication of the *Christian Baptist* two years later which became an instrumentality in public enlightenment and the dissemination of reformation principles, not second to any other used by Mr. Campbell in those early days. The debate with Mr. Walker was published in book form and was widely read by the clergy both Baptist and paedobaptist and by the intelligentia of the denominations on both sides. The immediate effect of the publication was a great accession of new friends among Baptists, whose cause had been so ably and unanswerably vindicated. The second result, of course, was a smaller host of enemies among paedobaptists, whose cause, in this first battle of the Marne, had been so mercilessly mauled, followed by an intensification of rancor and prejudice in the minds of the secession clergy, and the inner circle of church members immediately under their influence.

At the close of the Walker debate, Mr. Campbell, under the conviction that a more exhaustive discussion of the points at issue, with an abler and better equipped opponent, would be conducive to the cause of truth and progress, issued an invitation to the clergy, as follows:

I this day publish to all present that I feel disposed to meet any paedobaptist minister of any denomination of good standing in his party, and I engage to prove in a debate with him, either *viva voce* or with the pen that infant sprinkling is a human tradition and injurious to the well being of society, religious and political.

This challenge made a profound impression on the public mind, in fact, it hammered and heated the clerical brain to an unwonted degree of interest and excitement. The feeling was coextensive with the circulation of the printed debate, especially in the secession denomination, where the most damage had been effected, that something must be done to retrieve the situation and to stop the advance of a dangerous heresy.

The first thing, and the chief thing, was a prejudice propaganda commandeered by intolerance and bigotry so characteristic of the time and the clerical opponents of the new reformer.

The challenge thrown out was accepted by the Rev. William McCalla, of Augusta, Ky., which led to a lengthy correspondence extending over several months and getting nowhere. A great amount of time was consumed, and space covered, and not a single preliminary of a public discussion had been definitely arranged. McCalla refused to agree to any of the propositions suggested by Mr. Campbell, and declined to suggest any of his own, until his last epistle, in which he gingerly accepted the invitation to debate, and agreed to discuss the propositions canvassed in the debate with Walker. His aim seemed to be in the prosecution of this long drawn-out exchange of letters, to set up a theological slander mill, for the manufacture of the poisoned gas of distraction, misrepresentation, and the *odium theologicum*. He flung into the teeth of his correspondent, in the most offensive way, all of the villainous stories and slanderous distortions of truth which had obtained currency against him in Secession circles. He boldly intimated that unless such rumors were corrected, "no minister of a divine Savior could desire any

other intercourse with him than as an adversary." To this Mr. Campbell replied:

> You have told me that you are to meet me as an adversary—as *ho-Satanas.* Well, I hope that you will remember that when Michael, the archangel, disputed with the adversary about the body of Moses, he durst not bring against him a railing accusation. As you are celebrated for piety and orthodoxy, and I for want of them, a great deal will be expected of you and very little of me.

This "minister of a divine Savior," continued his efforts to cast odium upon his opponent by invariably referring to him as "the adversary," "the accuser"—*ho-Satanas,* up to the second afternoon of the debate, when one of the moderators arose and said that Mr. McCalla must know that these are the names given in Scripture to satan, who is called the "adversary" and "the accuser of the brethren." He thought that Mr. McCalla should treat his opponent as a gentlemen and as a Christian, although he differed from him on the questions under discussion. He hoped, therefore, that he would substitute the term "opponent," or any term less acrimonious and more consistent with candor and justice, in place of those offensive terms.

As Dr. Richardson remarked in this connection:

> It needed one of an intrepid spirit to brave theological odium and clerical denunciation, and to rebuke the bigotry, sectarianism, and venality which existed in the religious world. It needed one, too, of supreme regard for truth and uncompromising fidelity to the teachings of the Bible, to exhibit boldly the simple apostolic gospel and the primitive church order, in opposition to the corruption and spiritual despotism which then prevailed.

It was the old, old story of the bitter conflict between progress and reaction, and the friction it always engenders. We have it yet, and every generation that makes any effort to go ahead has it. Never since the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy have the officials of an institution who derived their support from it, been willing to see it reformed.

It is always the made-to-order professional who turns reactionary and blocks the way of progress. A man with a great head and a democratic heart, free from the shackles of self-centered professionalism, must come up from the people, and be driven forward by a kind of cosmic impulse, in the name of all the people, to successfully knock down official dagon—in the temple of conventional religion. Doctors, as a rule, do not lead in the reformation of *materia medica;* lawyers, except in rare individual instances, do not advocate changes or improvements in jurisprudence; and still less do preachers, as a class, lead in the reformation of the church.

Human nature seems to be essentially partisan, especially official human nature, and the first function of sectarianism is to assume the finality of its opinions, and there is hardly a step between finality and infallibility. Any effort, therefore, to change the final or to call in question the infallible, is resented as a crime of limitless proportions. It is this particular aspect of human psychology that makes the Jordan of reformation a hard road to travel. It is well known to nearly everybody now, if you want to down a man, you must not reason, you must not argue, you must not marshal evidence against him; do not attempt to brain him with the triple club of logic, fact and scripture. That would be a great waste of time, and your "adversary" would be almost certain to win the fight. Call him names; make faces at him, sneer, ridicule, whisper innuendoes, use the weapons of detraction and misrepresentation, set a few lies in motion against him and the work is done.

Mr. Campbell foreseeing the efforts of the clergy to poison the public mind against him in Kentucky where the debate with Mr. McCalla was to be held, withdrew the *Christian Baptist* from circulation in that section, till the close of the discussion. He did this to keep the people from being biased either one way or the other, until they had an opportunity of hearing what he had to say. His supreme desire was an impartial tribunal, a disinterested audience, open-minded and

without prejudice, capable of discrimination and sound judgment in listening to his presentation of the truth.

The campaign of prejudice, however, had been getting in its work, and the voice of the heresy hunter was heard in the land. On the other hand, the increasing warmth of his friendship with the Baptists, since the debate with Walker, and the union of the Brush Run congregation with the Mahoning Association, had paved the way for a more favorable reception of the man and his message. There was also, a bunch of intellectuals, usually outside of all the churches in Kentucky town communities, lawyers, doctors, teachers, with a college-bred farmer, here and there, with brains and culture enough to appreciate ability, and to recognize an argument when it made its appearance. These were the disinterested and capable judges of debates that took place in town, whether religious or political, and almost without exception when Alexander Campbell was one of the disputants, they became his most enthusiastic admirers, and sometimes his most faithful adherents.

The long journey of 300 miles from Bethany, West, Va., to Washington, Mason Co., Ky., the Ohio river at that time being too low for navigation, had to be made on horseback. On this toilsome trip, through forests and over mountain roads his only companion was Sydney Rigdon, a brilliant and eloquent young Baptist minister, who at that time was as much devoted to Mr. Campbell as Boswell was to Johnson; albeit he was not as good a Boswell as Campbell was a Johnson, as he gave us no record of the brilliant talk which must have illuminated the woods on that long historic journey. Rigdon afterwards gained notoriety and immortality of infamy by joining the Mormons, and collaborating with Joseph Smith, Jr., in transmogrifying the old Spaulding manuscript novel into the book of Mormon. The method of this transmogrification fraud, was the insertion of fragments of Scripture, torn from their connections, into the text of the Spaulding fiction, giving it the form and archaic flavor of the King James

translation of the Bible and then, by the transfusion into the fabric of the story of as much of Mr. Campbell's theology as he could remember. It was this latter fact that gave some slight semblance of truth to the charge afterward made, that Mormonism was the daughter of Campbellism. It only proves that Rigdon, who had been preaching for sometime the world's need of a new religion, had united with a bigger rascal than himself, to perpetrate one upon mankind, that both of them knew to be a fraud. The only thing Rigdon could appreciate was novelty, and his new religion had plenty of that.

Mr. Campbell speaks of his arrival at Washington and adds:

> The preliminaries being settled, the Rev. J. K. Burch, Presbyterian, being chosen by Mr. McCalla and Elder Jeremiah Vardeman, Baptist, by myself, and these having chosen Judge Roper to preside with them, I opened the discussion Oct. 15, 1823, in the presence of a very large assembly of citizens, and the clergy of all denominations in the country. I appeared as the defendant of the Baptist community against their assailant, Mr. McCalla, who had been for some time, smoke in their eyes, and thorns in their sides. The counties of Northern Kentucky echoed with his praises, as a learned, shrewd, and able debater: one who had long practiced various ways of assaulting the distinctive tenets of the Baptist community, much to the mortification of that denomination, and much to the glorification of his own society and the Methodist. This gave to the occasion a livelier interest and greatly excited public attention.

Concerning himself he said:

> I was to the whole community a stranger. A few only of the teachers and public men had read my discussion with Rev. John Walker of the secession church, in Ohio.

Mr. Campbell's reputation had preceded him to a wider extent than is here indicated, as is shown by a good story told by his moderator, Rev. Jeremiah Vardeman. As this gentleman was on his way to the debate, traveling in a gig, he overtook, about eleven miles from Washington, a man on foot, and hailing him, inquired whither he was going. He said he was on his way to Washington. "Why," said Vardeman, "you must have very urgent business to walk so far on such roads

as these," for, as it had been raining recently, the roads were very muddy. The man replied that he had no call of business, but that he was going to hear the debate that was to come off on the 15th. Surprised at this Vardeman took him at once to be a very zealous Baptist, and affecting to be on the other side, said, "Is not our man likely to whip your man Campbell?" The man gave him a searching look, and asked, "Can you tell me if this is the same Mr. Campbell who debated with Mr. Walker at Mt. Pleasant, Ohio?" Elder Vardeman said he believed he was. The stranger then said: "I am not a member of any church, I am going to the debate on the supposition that this is the Mr. Campbell who debated at Mt. Pleasant three years ago. I heard that debate, and all I have to say is, that all creation cannot whip that Mr. Campbell."

Elder Vardeman, who was noted for his power in defending the practice of immersion, was not a little gratified with this unexpected and very decided testimony to Mr. Campbell's ability, and came on to the debate, full of cheerful expectation as to the fortunes of his favorite tenet.

And now, dear reader, take careful note of the amazing contrast between the acrid and rancerous sectarianism and bad manners of Mr. Campbell's opponent, and his own sweetness and light, high motives and kindly spirit, as made manifest in these opening remarks of the debate:

> Through the goodness and mercy of God I appear before you, at this time and in this place, for the purpose of contending for a part of that faith, and an item of that religious practice, once delivered to the saints. My prayer to God is, that for the sake of his son Jesus Christ I may speak as I ought to speak; that in the spirit of the truth I may contend for the truth; that with humility and love, with zeal according to knowledge and unfeigned devotion, I may open my lips on every occasion when I address my fellow mortal and immortal creatures on the subject of religion. Expecting that they and I will soon appear before the judgment seat of Christ, may I speak in such a way that I may be neither ashamed nor afraid to meet them there. May I ever act under the influence of that wisdom which cometh from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and of good

fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. And may you, my friends, examine, and prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.

Further he said:

Our design, my paedobaptist friends, is not to widen the breach, or to throw stumbling blocks in the way, by inflaming your passions; but to lead you to understand this most important institution of the Lord of glory, that whosoever of you feareth God may unite with me in keeping his commandments as delivered unto us by his holy Apostles.

## CHAPTER IV

## McCALLA DEBATE CONCLUDED

*New Features and Striking Peculiarities of This Debate. Its Historic Influence. Beginning of the Reformation in Kentucky.*

Men, Brethren and Fathers:

Through the goodness and mercy of God, I appear before you, at this time and in this place, for the purpose of contending for a part of that faith and an item of that religious practice, once delivered to the saints. My prayer to God is, that for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ I may speak as I ought to speak; that in the spirit of the truth I may contend for the truth; that with humility and love, with zeal according to knowledge and unfeigned devotion, I may open my lips on every occasion when I address my fellow mortal and immortal creatures on the subject of religion. Expecting that they and I will soon appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, may I speak in such a way that I may not be ashamed nor afraid to meet them there. May I ever act under the influence of that "wisdom which cometh from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and of good fruits without partiality and without hypocrisy." And may you, my friends, examine and "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good."

—*Campbell's opening words in his debate with McCalla.*

## CHAPTER IV

### McCALLA DEBATE CONCLUDED

THESE initial debates between Alexander Campbell and his two seceder opponents had most to do with the subject of infant baptism, or infant affusion, more correctly speaking: the origin of the practice, its historic evolutions in ecclesiastical tradition, its relation to church membership, the spiritual character of the church, Christian union, and the secularization of Christianity. As a proposition for debate it held the center of the stage in the controversy between Baptists and paedobaptists at that stage of American denominational history. Although at this time, Mr. Campbell was a Presbyterian with reservations—he was in the debate with Mr. McCalla, the recognized champion of that denomination, in opposition to infant affusion, and sprinkling as a substitute for immersion. Mr. McCalla, as a matter of course, made the same arguments for the rantizing of babes by the church that Mr. Walker had made at Mt. Pleasant, only with more elaboration and a greater show of scholarship and skill in the use of controversial weapons. Like his predecessor the Rev. John Walker and his successor, Robert Owen, the atheistic socialist, Mr. Campbell's next opponent, he had committed nearly all of his material to writing, spent most of his time with his face glued to a manuscript, taking little notice of the annihilation of his argumentative structure so laboriously built up on paper. This left his opponent free to demolish him with a few master strokes, leaving himself ample leisure to invade the wide fields of theological reconstruction and reformation, based on a rational, spiritual, and common sense interpretation of the Bible.

Mr. Campbell's chief advantage in debate, was not only mental ability and dialectic skill, and adequate scholarship on

the subjects discussed, but his accurate and comprehensive knowledge of the Bible, and the superior methods he used in the interpretation of the Book. His clerical opponents had been trained in the study of theology, systematic divinity, ecclesiastical history, church organization, and administration, and the scrap doctor construction of sermons, but their ignorance of the Bible was only equalled, if not exceeded by their lack of understanding in its interpretation.

Take a single instance under the first head, Mr. Campbell's familiarity with the book, and his textual accuracy, over against the opposite in his opponent who had characterized himself as "the minister of a divine Savior." Mr. McCalla in stating his method of proof declared his intention of finding a positive divine command in Holy Scripture for infant baptism. The first thing he did in the execution of this promise was an effort to prove that a divine command for a positive institution, such as he alleged infant baptism to be, was not necessary. He said:

> For instance, there is no express declaration of the unity of God to be found in the Old Testament—no express proof in so many words—yet we know this proof to be a part of divine revelation as certainly as though it were expressly declared in so many words.

Mr. Campbell, who knew his Bible replied:

> He would place the unity of God and infant baptism upon the same obscure footing! No express revelation of either! Did he ever read "Hear Oh, Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord?"

That monumental passage affirming the unity of God, is one of the most important in the Old Testament, and yet a learned divine of the 19th century, did not know of its existence!

Another specimen not specifically of Scripture knowledge, but in a more general way of Scripture interpretation. When Mr. McCalla declared his purpose and his ability to produce a divine command for infant baptism, Mr. Campbell, naturally on the alert, having read his Bible many times without finding such command, or anything bearing the remotest resemblance to it, could not help but wonder if the trick up his

opponent's sleeve was something in the nature of the sleight of hand process that can draw full grown rabbits out of wads of tissue paper. Well, the attempt was made to fulfill the promise, and what do you think it was? It was neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring, nor living rabbits out of rolls of paper: it was the old baptism in the room of circumcision scheme and bogy, a long drawn inference, based on a groundless assumption, already torn to slivers and beaten to a pulp! In fact this baptism in the room of circumcision dogma met its Waterloo here at Washington, Ky. It got such a dramatic and tragic punch on the *solar plexus* that it was not only knocked out, and counted out, but it stayed out. No subsequent opponent of Alexander Campbell, and no educated paedobaptist disputant, ever attempted to resurrect it. Presbyterian ministers joined in the proclamation of its demise, and in giving it burial without benefit of clergy.

The chief trouble with these educated ministers of a divine Savior, was that they ignored the dispensations of religion; they were blind to the distinctly separated stages of evolution in the progress of revelation, and tried to interpret the Bible by jumbling it altogether without intelligent standards of evaluation, as to its different parts, or distinction between the ages of religious development. They talked of Christians and of Christian churches as existing two or three thousand years before the birth of Christ, or the beginning of the Christian era and the Christian church; and they answered the question what must I do to be saved, propounded in the Acts of Apostles by going back to Leviticus and Numbers and the song of songs! As I have said before, and shall probably say again, the chief purpose of our reformer in holding these debates was not to defend immersion nor to overthrow infant baptism, but to teach the clergy sane and rational methods of interpreting and teaching the Holy Scriptures, so that they might be able to "rightly divide the word of truth" in their ministrations to the people.

This kind of instruction in dispensational distinctions, and

in common sense methods of biblical interpretation, is almost as much needed now as it was a hundred years ago. It was the distinguishing glory of the two Campbells that they invested the Bible with a new interest, made it a living book, and not a dead fetish, not a mere repertoire of isolated texts for scrap doctors to dilate upon in their Sunday sermons. Alexander Campbell, in particular, was the first of the great Bible students in the 19th century to sanctify by actual employment, the historical and literary canons and rules of criticism and laws of language, in the investigation of the problems of Holy Scripture, which have been in vogue ever since, except among reactionary denominationalists, including some of the Disciples.

In the debate on the mode or action of baptism, Mr. Campbell had an easy task to show from Greek dictionaries, the classic Greek literature of a thousand years, New Testament Greek and its translation into English, ecclesiastical history, and the usage of the primitive church, the history of the Greek church, custodian of the Greek language, which has practiced immersion from the Apostolic age to the present hour—it was not difficult to show from considerations like these, that the Greek word for baptism meant primarily and ordinarily—in fact universally—to dip, to plunge, to immerse. It was pointed out that if Christ had intended to institute sprinkling and pouring, for baptism he would have used the specific and unmistakable Greek words that meant to sprinkle and pour, and not the specific and definite term that signified to immerse. The answers to these points were quibbles about secondary meanings, and exceptional cases, which for the most part did not exist, and for the rest had not the remotest reference to baptism in its New Testament acceptation.

Towards the close of the debate on this proposition a very amusing and diverting incident occurred. Mr. McCalla had much to say on the dangers and indelicacies of immersion, insisting that it was pernicious not only to the subject, but to the administrator.

The administrators, he said, were exposed to sickness, and it must unavoidably be injurious to them to be plunging into cold water at all seasons, and continuing in it so long, as they often did, and miraculous escapes were not to be expected.

To this Mr. Campbell replied:

Benjamin Franklin, when minister in Paris, dined with a number of French and American gentlemen. A learned French abbé, at dinner, entertained the company, with a learned disquisition on the deteriorating influence of the American climate on the bodies of all animals, alleging that the human body diminished in size and in energy, and that even the mind itself shared in the general deterioration. Dr. Franklin made no reply, but after dinner, having told the company with what pleasure he had heard the learned disquisitions of the philosopher, he moved that the company be divided, observing that the fairest way of testing the correctness of the abbé's theory was to place all the Americans on one side of the room, and the French on the other. The motion was carried, and behold a company of little, swarthy, insignificant Frenchmen on one side, and a row of little giants on the other! "Ay" says the Dr. "See, here is a striking proof of the correctness of your theory! Now let us take the philosopher's way of testing the correctness of the theory of my opponent. There sits on the bench a Baptist and a paedobaptist teacher, both well advanced in years; the former has, we are told, immersed more persons than any other person of the same age in the United States; the other, from his venerable age, may be supposed to have sprinkled a great many infants. Now, see the pernicious tendency of immersion on the Baptist, and the happy influence of sprinkling on the paedobaptist!"

Dr. Richardson rounds up the story by adding: "As Mr. Birch, the Presbyterian Moderator was a small and somewhat sickly looking person, and Bishop Vardeman was of magnificent proportions, being upwards of six feet in stature, weighing three hundred pounds and of a remarkably florid aspect, possessing uncommon and undiminished energy and vigor, though 50 years of age, the striking contrast thus presented, and the ironical illustration it furnished greatly amused the audience at the expense of Mr. McCalla and his argument." The Seceder's come back at this brilliant sally was feebleness and bad taste personified. He went back to his old game of attempting to excite prejudice against Mr. Campbell, by

charging him with being an enemy to all morality, to the observance of the Sabbath, and to the good cause of sending the gospel to the heathen. He then concluded with the profound declaration: "that he would never discuss this question again until an opponent would come from the regions discovered by Captain Simmes, and until a moderator would come from Holland weighing five hundred pounds."

The outstanding peculiarity of this discussion on Mr. Campbell's side was the new developments in the doctrine of baptism for the remission of sins. The only original and peculiar distinction of Mr. Campbell's reformatory aspirations, thus far developed in a doctrinal way, was the idea of the immersion of a penitent believer, upon a confession of his faith, into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in order to the remission of his past sins. This conception broached in the debate with Mr. Walker, drawn out sufficiently to be used, with great effect in an argument against infant baptism, had not, at this time, attained the dignity of a separate proposition for discussion, as it did in future debates. The idea had been growing in his mind and in the minds of his associates, further examination of the New Testament, had strengthened the convictions expressed at Mt. Pleasant and used so effectively against the tradition of infant affusion.

In the three years' interval, the matter had assumed an attitude of fundamental importance, in the restoration of Apostolic Christianity, as a basis of unity, in the preaching of the inspired evangel, and in the administration of the central ordinance of the Christian faith. The opportunity offered by the debate at Washington to elucidate and further elaborate the New Testament idea of baptism and the remission of sins, was not to be lost.

After referring to the Scriptures, which indisputably declare this connection, he proceeded to explain the sense and meaning of this relationship.

> The blood of Christ, then, *really* cleanses us who believe from all sin. Behold the goodness of God in giving us a formal token of it, by ordaining a baptism expressly "for the remission of sins." The water of baptism, then, *formally* washes away our sins. The blood of Christ *really* washes away our sins. Paul's sins were *really pardoned* when he believed, yet he had no solemn pledge of the fact, no *formal* acquittal, no *formal* purgation of his sins until he washed them away in the water of baptism. To every believer, therefore, baptism is a *formal* and *personal remission* or purgation of sins.

It goes without saying that we must pause long enough at this point to relate the familiar story of Raccoon John Smith, accosted in the streets of Georgetown by a zealous Baptist, who flourished a copy of the debate in his face, and shouted:

> What are you going to do about it, Mr. Smith? Here it is in black and white; your man Campbell has declared in this debate with Mr. McCalla that Paul's sins were really pardoned when he believed and formally pardoned when he was baptized; what have you to say to that Mr. Smith?

Raccoon John replied:

> I have this to say: Mr. Campbell said that when he was a Baptist and had no more sense than the rest of you Baptists.

That was smart retort and brilliant repartee whatever one may think of its theological implications.

There is at least one thing of historical significance along the line of doctrinal evolution in those days, and that is, if Mr. Campbell had stuck to that interpretation of the meaning and purpose of baptism, the rupture between him and the Baptists would have been indefinitely postponed. It is true they turned him out of the church because he said in his famous sermon on the law, that Judaism was not Christianity, that Christians were not under the law of Moses, and that John the Baptist did not establish the church in the wilderness, nor anywhere else. But these minor issues could have been reconciled and adjusted to union if the interpretation of baptism, given out in the debate with McCalla, could have held the field in reformation pulpits. Mr. Campbell's biographer makes this comment on the passage just cited:

Thus the design of baptism and its true place in the economy of the gospel, had gradually become clearer, and its importance proportionally enhanced in his estimation, since the debate with Walker. Often, during the intervening period, had this particular point been the subject of conversation between him and his father, as well as with Walter Scott, and of careful Scripture examinations, and these utterances in the McCalla debate presented the views they had beforehand agreed upon as the true and obvious teachings of the New Testament.

The evolutionary process and resultant changes, did not stop here, at least, with the men associated with Mr. Campbell, and many that came later into the movement. The exigencies of controversy, which always tend to extreme measures and short cuts, hardened these broader and deeper conceptions of the reformer on the design of baptism into ideas concerning the ordinance that abolished all distinctions between real and formal, vital and incidental, internal and external; changing the most spiritual and symbolical of religious rites into a juridic institution based on legal enactment, to be enforced and practiced in terms of courthouses and political constitutions, after the manner of the priests' code in Exodus and Leviticus. This was no help, but a great hindrance to the ideals of unity cherished by the movement.

Mr. Campbell himself, at heart, never shared these legalistic views, although at times he seemed to sanction them. His matured and final conceptions on the subject are formulated and fully canvassed in the debate with Rice twenty years later. These will be weighed and considered and their relation to the success of the movement indicated, when that point is reached in the course of these historical studies.

This discussion with McCalla, in 1823, in its most important record was the beginning of the current reformation in Kentucky. The forces liberated, and the influences set in motion in that discussion, were electrical, illuminating, and far reaching in the consequences that followed. The effects were more pronounced and effective than they had been at Mt. Pleasant three years before.

The personality of the reformer, his extraordinary dialectic power, the freshness of his thoughts, the originality of his conceptions, the simplicity and clearness of his manner of interpreting and teaching the Holy Scriptures, made a great impression on the susceptibilities of the orator-loving, brain-admiring and genius-worshiping Kentuckian of the blue grass regions. At the close he paid a running visit to Lexington, the blue grass capital, in company with Elder Vardeman, preached a single sermon, in the Baptist church, of which the most eloquent and eminent divine in Kentucky, Dr. Fishback, was pastor, and what a sermon it must have been! It was on the Divinity of Christ, based on the first chapter of Hebrews, and it never ceased to be talked about till the last man died who heard it. Dr. Theo. S. Bell, an eminent physician of Louisville, thus speaks of it:

> I never had heard anything that approached the power of that discourse, nor have I ever heard it equalled since. Under the training of my mother, one of the most thorough scholars in the Bible that I ever knew, and of Dr. Fishback, although I then made no pretensions to Christianity, I was almost as familiar with the Bible as with my alphabet. But that speech on Hebrews lifted me into a world of thought of which I had previously known nothing. It has been forty-five years since I heard that pulpit discourse, but it is as vivid in my memory, I think, as when I first heard it.

After that prophetic, historic deliverance, Lexington, then both the Athens and the Jerusalem of the South and West, capitulated to Alexander Campbell, and ever afterwards regarded him as the mightiest intellect that had ever visited the city. And the intellectual contest was not all. The religious movement under his leadership, pleading for the restoration of the unity and catholicity of the apostolic church, obtained a footing at once, and soon became the greatest spiritual force in the city's life, and all the region round about, and remains so, and more so, to this day. A few years later, a gentleman, standing on the steps of a church in Paris, a flourishing town about half way between Lexington and Washington, declared, as he waved his right hand through the air:

**Campbellism, Bourbon whiskey, and dogfennel have taken the blue grass of Kentucky, and the first named of this trinity will soon have captured the whole state.**

To which may be added by a witness who deposeth nearly a hundred years later, Bourbon whiskey has gone to where the woodbine twineth, and let us hope to that bourne whence no traveler returns; dogfennel has diminished to a negligible quantity, but what the gentleman called Campbellism, is the regnant spiritual force of central Kentucky, has the mountain regions to the east fairly well in hand, with a much stronger and more vigorous and growing representation in the bear grass and pennyroyal regions to the south and southwest, and on to the boundary lines of Ohio and Tennessee. All of this and much more came out of the debate between Alexander Campbell and Wm. McCalla in the little town of Washington, Mason County, Kentucky in the fall of 1823. A history making episode, wasn't it?

## CHAPTER V

## THIRD DEBATE: CONFLICT BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND INFIDELITY

*The Debate with Mr. Robert Owen, of New Lanark, Scotland, in Cincinnati, Ohio, April* 13 *to* 21, 1829. *Impressions of an Eye and Ear Witness.*

By my intercourse with Mr. Campbell I concluded he was conscientiously desirous of ascertaining truth from error on these momentous subjects, that he was much experienced in public discussions, and well educated for the ministry. His superior talents were generally admitted. Under these circumstances, I did not feel myself at liberty to decline the call he had publicly made upon me. —*Robert Owen.*

What is man? Whence came he? Whither does he go? Is he a mortal or an immortal being? Is he doomed to spring up like the grass, bloom like a flower, drop his seed into the earth, and die forever? Is there no object of future hope? No God—no heaven —no exalted society to be known or enjoyed? * * * These are the awful and sublime merits of the question at issue. It is not what we shall eat, nor what we shall drink, unless we shall be proved to be mere animals; but it is, shall we live or die forever? It is as beautifully expressed by a Christian poet—

"Shall spring ever visit the mouldering urn?
Shall day ever dawn on the night of the grave?"

—*Alexander Campbell.*

# CHAPTER V

## THIRD DEBATE: CONFLICT BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND INFIDELITY

I AM indebted to A. McLean of the Foreign Christian Missionary Society for a typewritten copy of an article from an old magazine, which he dug up from the historical and literary archives of Cincinnati, in which the editor, who attended the Campbell and Owen debate, gave his impressions of the men and their respective causes. This document has historical value as a record of the disinterested opinions and observations of an intelligent outsider. It has also a secondary if somewhat diverting importance as a rhetorical composition, characteristic of the time. As a specimen of stilted, high flown, Johnsonian, Bishop Bascom rhetoric, it takes the cake, passes it around and goes the length of referring to a debate as a "logomachic tilt" and a "grand tournament."

Those were the good old times down south when big-word orators and rhetorical scribes spoke of a thimble as an "argentiferous truncated cone, convex on the summit and semi-perforated with symmetrical indentations." But notwithstanding these spots on the sun, from the point of view of our modern simplicity, I make no apology for using this report and criticism of the great debate somewhat freely. It is both interesting and edifying and wholy pertinent to the end I have in view.

With a few strokes of his wordy pen he touches up the circumstances of its origin. He writes:

> The glove was first thrown down by Mr. Owen, in New Orleans. None of the ministers there saw fit to take it up although the Presbyterian Synod was in session at the time. But it was circulated extensively in the papers that the ministers were challenged, the world

over, to a logomachic tilt with Mr. Owen, on the evidences of Christianity. Mr. Campbell, who had gained extensive reputation by dealing hard and dexterous blows as a polemic theological disputant at Washington, Mason County, Ky., in a set disputation with Rev. Mr. McCalla on some points between Presbyterians and Baptists, took up the glove and publicly advertised, that his courage was up to the point of doing battle, in this grand tournament, in the face of all Christians and, more especially before all the gentlemen and ladies who might assemble, at any given place, which should be central and convenient for the said disputation. Mr. Owen on his way from New Harmony, Ind., to Europe included Bethany in his route and called on the Rev. Mr. Campbell and ascertained, satisfactorily, not only the extent of his calibre, but the keenness of his metal, his disposition for fairness of fight, and the honest zeal for the truth, which he was compelled to believe, filled the bosom of this gentleman. Having measured with his eye the proud dimensions, the brawny intellectual muscle and sinew of this offering opponent; having ascertained to his satisfaction that there was a happy mixture of Scotch shrewdness with Kentucky hard fight in the premises, he deemed it not unworthy a logomachic fame, won extensively in both hemispheres, to engage with Mr. Campbell to do wordy battle in the city of Cincinnati, in the month of April and the year, commonly called that of our Lord, 1829.

We next have a descriptive word on the interval between this interview and the beginning of the discussion:

Mr. Owen having settled the preliminaries of the fight, went his way meditating upon the eventful disputation, over the resounding sea, to New Lanark in Scotland; talked, we dare say, about the social system; and, no doubt, felt the germ of an intellectual egg silently breeding within him, from which, in due time, should hatch the embryo of rout, ruin and dismay, to ministers, titles and match-makers. The other betook himself, like a high mettled and good soldier of the church militant, to all the black letter, long bearded sages from Sanchoniathon and Herodotus down to Dr. Fishback of Lexington. Meantime, the papers from Dan to Beersheba, from Land's End to the Shetland Islands, from Calais to the Archangel, from Roddy to the Sabine, rung with the note of preparation for this grand tournament, with which our city was to be honored.

The attitude of the press is next touched upon; the indifference of the secular papers, that stupidly failed to realize what a source of good copy they were allowing to pass unimproved, and the hostility of the denominational religious

press, which knew only too well, that it had no use for copy, whatever might happen to be its character with which Alexander Campbell had anything to do in producing. He was the David who had cracked the skull of sectarian denominationalism in at least two fatal instances, and what could another victory mean, even against the common enemy, except increased publicity and popularity for the heretic and his heresies? This was the true inwardness of the attitude of the denominational press of the city, which our candid witness did not seem to know. He writes:

> Most of the papers gave it a passing article without note or comment; and so we received it in different papers, that came to us over the sea. Not so the enlightened, amiable, mild, most logical erudite *Pandect* of our city. It growled thereupon, in a tone evincing that the writer had a load of most righteous bile on his bosom; regarding the approaching tournament with any feelings, rather than those of delectation and quiet confidence in the omnipotence of truth. It rather seemed to the said *Pandect* as though war, pestilence and famine were all concentrated in this most puissant mischief. But though this tasteful, evangelical and singularly logical vehicle was moved to the interior against the said disputation, as a most pestilent mischief, the Ohio still flowed downwards. The disputants, heeding not this manifest displeasure, ate and drank as in duty bound, as *Athletae,* on a system of diet and regimen, in training for this eventful collision of intellect.

His account of the arrival of the *Athletae* in Cincinnati is decidedly moving.

> In due time we learned that the champion of the covenant had been wafted down our stream from the rising sun in burnished panoply, and fraught with abundant syllogistic appointments from the ample magazines of Bethany. The European philosopher had gained saltiness on the Atlantic brine; had heard natural thunder in the tropical Isles of Jamaica and Cuba, had defied the black vomit of Vera Cruz; and had been perched in the empyrean and meditative heights of the city of Montezuma, treasuring materials of power as he thus traversed both hemispheres, he came upwards on us from the west. Thus these conflicting minds came in contact in our city, like two conflicting thunder clouds.

Equally impelling is the writer's description of the two *Athletae,* who engage in this "Grand tournament" and "Logomachic Tilt." Said he:

Then, we gazed at the two *Athletae* and imagined the munitions of logomachy laid away in mysterious and awful order and power in the narrow precincts of "two small heads." We silently admired the infinite compressibility of that knowledge, which is power, more energetic than thundered from all the cannon of Borodino.

He writes again:

Every one has seen the face or the print of the benevolent "social" cosmopolite, the Welsh philosopher, whose strange taste it is, to wander over the world, bestowing vast sums in charity, and to obtain return an ample harvest of vilification and abuse. He was dressed in Quaker plainness wearing his customary undaunted, self-possessed, good natured face surmounted, as most people know, with an intellectual rudder of almost portentous amplitude, that might well have been deemed an acquisition in a pilgrimage to the promontory of noses. From each side of his prominent index of mental power beamed such an incessant efflux of cheerfulness, as might well shame, in comparison, the sour and tristful visage of many an heir of the hope of immortality.

Referring, of course to Mr. Campbell:

The chivalrous champion of the covenant is a citizen of Bethany, near Wheeling in Virginia; a gentleman we should think between thirty and forty; (He was 41) with a long face, a rather small head, of a sparkling bright and cheerful countenance, and finely arched forehead; in the earnest vigor of youth, and with the very first sprinkling of white on his crown. He wore an aspect as of one who had words both ready and inexhaustible and as possessed of the excellent grace of perseverance, to a degree that he would not retract an inch in the way of concession, to escape the crack and pudder of a dissolving world. His venerable gray headed father, also a clergyman, and two younger brothers, were with him. It was understood that he was independent in point of property, and that he edits a religious paper of extensive circulation. It ought not to be forgotten that both the father and son perform their clerical duties to the congregation at Bethany, gratis.

Perhaps the most penetrating remark in this flood refers to a characteristic feature of the Campbell and Owen debate that every reader of the published work cannot help but notice:

The historian relateth with grief that during the eight long days of this logical tournament, these two coursers were riding up and down the field of controversy, constantly menacing fight, but never coming to close quarters in the actual tug of battle; for lo: instead of an effectual "closing in" quiddities and metaphysical cuts and thrusts, which we expected would "make the lint fly," at once, Mr. Owen "fought shy," reserved his fire and intrenched himself impregnably behind the "twelve divine, fundamental laws of human nature" precisely as our soldiers did on the glorious 8th, behind the cotton bales below New Orleans. On the contrary, our Western friend of the covenant showed manful fight on the open field, to the end of the joust.

The editor of the *Western Monthly Review* further testifies by giving his readers a very suggestive analysis of Mr. Owen's effort at argument and illustration. It has the merit of showing that such attempts at argument were instinctively answered by the people, who heard, before Mr. Campbell could get to them. They laughed his twelve laws out of countenance, horror stricken at his gospel of dirt and death.

"The twelve fundamental laws," or twelve pillars of the social system, are predicated on the following asserted doctrines. We are the "effects" of our "circumstances," as strictly as inanimate matter obeys its laws. Therefore, we are not subjects of responsibility, praise or blame. We can neither think, act, love, hate, marry, become fathers, eat, drink, sleep, or die, other than as we do. These irresistible circumstances having placed us in a predicament, every way *nauseous* and irrational, it follows that we ought, forthwith, to assert our control over these uncontrollable circumstances, and change them for the infinitely better class, which the philosopher proposeth in their stead. He came over these laws with a frequency of development and repetition, which elicited a frequent laugh at his expense from all who perceived not that his sole purpose, in this tournament, was to make the reputation of his antagonist a kite, to take up his social system into the full view of the community, and by constant repetition to imprint a few of his leading axioms on the

memory of the multitude, that could, in no other way, have been collected to hear.

The positions, which he thus fixed on the memory of his hearers, with an untiring perseverance, were, that a Christian infant educated in Hindoostan would be a Gentoo, in Turkey a Mohammedan, in a cannibal tribe a cannibal, in a Quaker family a Quaker; and so of the rest. He would have nothing to do with speculation, and would take nothing but *facts*. There were no facts, on which to affirm, or deny, touching the being of a God, the origin of a material universe, nor man. We knew a few facts, and might form probable conjectures about others. He believed some historical statements, when they ran not counter to the twelve laws; but held all history of a contrary character wonderfully cheap. It may be, therefore, imagined how he disposed of the external and internal evidences, the miracles and prophecies of our religion. His twelve laws constituted a grand besom, with which all religions, of all ages and climes, were alike to be brushed away, "like chaff before the wind."

He described the biped breed, under present circumstances, as being miserable stock. He said that he had never seen "a rational face" in his life. The origin of the present generation seemed to him an ill-managed, half-dozing "circumstance" of the legal prostitution, called marriage. That matter was now better understood, as it related to the great improvement of the breed of quadrupeds, which, he hinted, might be carried to an infinitely higher and more worthy scale of melioration when applied to the breed of bipeds. The energy of mutual liking, and of constantly accumulating power of mind, will and muscle, promised illimitable advantages to the generations of the future. As it was now, it was a joke and rank perjury to swear, either in prose or rhyme, on the knees or howsoever "stirring the stumps in doleful dumps," that the parties would love each other *till death them do part;* seeing it was not improbable, from the analogy of no

small number of similar cases, that they would prove very tabby cats soon after the lapse of the honeymoon.

Christian society was one web of lie, warp and woof, dissimulation, quarrel, and bloodshed. All the great drama of deceptive acting, all the malevolence, poverty and evils of society he traced to the *Free Will* systems of religion, to the priests and the weekly preachings of ministers, to whom none might reply. Some of his illustrations had simplicity, piquancy and point. Take an example. He said:

> My friends, it is not quite two months, since I was in the great square in the city of Mexico. I heard a little bell tinkle. A friend said to me, Kneel down, Mr. Owen, or you may else be killed. The Host is passing. I took out my pocket handkerchief, laid it on the ground, and kneeled on it. Had you been reared in Mexico, my friends, you would have been as serious in that way, as you are now in your own. And, so far as numbers can give authority to opinion, they are greatly your superiors.

According to his reasoning:

> The social system is to be a complete renovator and purifier, *a nova progenies,* a new race of most vigorous and beautiful lads and lassies is to be turned into the fresh clover field of existence. Undisturbed with meditations upon the past or the future; unshackled with matrimony, almost freed from disease and the seeds of decay, performing the little labor necessary to subsistence, chiefly by machinery, with the greatest abundance of the best of everything for human nature (a favorite phrase), these pretty ones will have little to do, but to eat, and drink, and rise up to play; billing like turtle doves, so long as mutual liking lasts; and dissolving the partnership with the first harbingers of a murky atmosphere. They will treasure chemistry, philosophy and useful knowledge, and pry into some of nature's privacies in a new sort of style. Children of five years will know more than the best educated scholars of twenty do in the present order of things. The world is to be dotted off into one immense family of communities, of a minimum of three hundred and a maximum of two thousand, all wantoning in the aforesaid rich clover field. Travelling is to be freed from its present bitter concomitant, expense; for the traveller will be everywhere at home, and welcome to the commonwealth of the community. Society will be inexpressibly delectable; for like will cling to like, precisely like two magnets.

Such is Mr. Owen's romance of the social system—as fair as a peony, as fragrant as white honeysuckle; as loving, as the Vermonter said, as *forty*—and alas! as short-lived as the prophet's gourd.

"The particles which compose my body," said the philosopher, "are eternal. They had no beginning, and can have no end. I shall be decomposed, and lose my consciousness in death, to be recomposed, and to reappear in new forms of life and enjoyment." At least he could not be charged with disguise, nor reservation; but came out with gratuitous plainness, in the most revolting and desolating tenets of the creed of the everlasting sleep of death. As he uttered this, a general revulsion of horror passed across the countenance of the crowded audience. We felt at the moment the long covered coals of our own eloquence burning in our bosom; and fancied that we could have made an overwhelming appeal to the horror stricken multitude. Not so Mr. Campbell. He had other combinations for the close of the campaign, and had determined to put his antagonist to the logical sword, in his own time and way, *secundum artem*. Mr. Owen aware of the impression he had created, diverted the current of feeling by a pun. "My friends," said he, "you have heard these wonderful stories. If you can away with them all—you are able, indeed, to swallow a camel (Campbell)."

# CHAPTER VI

## ROBERT OWEN AND HIS SOCIAL SYSTEM

*Agnosticism before Huxley, and Bolshevism before Lenine and Trotsky.*

I propose to prove, as I have already attempted to do in my lectures, that all the religions of the world have been founded on the ignorance of mankind; that they are directly opposed to the never-changing laws of our nature; that they have been, and are, the real source of vice, disunion, and misery of every description; that they are now the only real bar to the formation of a society of virtue, of intelligence, of charity in its most extended sense, and of sincerity and kindness among the whole human family; and that they can be no longer maintained except through the ignorance of the mass of the people, and the tyranny of the few over that mass. —*Robert Owen.*

Never was there such a moral phenomenon exhibited upon this earth as the first establishment and progress of Christianity. The instruments by which it was established, the opposition with which it was met, and the success which attended its career, were all of the most extraordinary character. The era of Christianity itself presents a very sublime spectacle: the whole world reposing in security under the protecting wings of the most august of all the Cæsars; peace, universal peace, with her healthful arms encircling all the nations composing the great empire which was itself the consummation of all the empires of the ancient world. Polytheism, with her myriads of temples and her myriads of priests, triumphantly seated in the affections of a superstitious people, and swaying a magic scepter from the Tiber to the ends of the earth. Legislators, magistrates, philosophers, orators, and poets, all combined to plead her cause and to protect her from insult and injury. Rivers of sacrificial blood crimsoned all the rites of pagan worship; and clouds of incense arose from every city, town, and hamlet, in honor of the gods of Roman superstition. Just in this singular and unrivaled crisis, when the Jews' religion, though corrupted by tradition and distracted by faction, was venerated for its antiquity, and admired for its divinity; when idolatry was at its zenith in the pagan world, the Star of Bethlehem appears. The marvelous scene opens in a stable. What fearful odds! What a strange contrast! Idolatry on the throne, and the founder of a new religion and a new empire lying in a manger! —*Alexander Campbell.*

## CHAPTER VI

### ROBERT OWEN AND HIS SOCIAL SYSTEM

THE brilliant author of *De Profundis* remarked that he was glad to find that there were Christians before Christ, but sorry to have to admit that there hadn't been any since, with the solitary exception of St. Francis of Assissi. There have been plenty of agnostics since Huxley coined the word and Bolsheviks without number, since Lenine painted Russia with the blood of her best citizens; but Huxley was not the first agnostic, nor Lenine and Trotsky the first Bolsheviks. We have a composite mental photograph of the three in the personality and philosophy of Robert Owen, a citizen of the world, who was born in Wales and hailed from Scotland; who lived a long time, debated and propagated his nostrums, before the apostle of agnosticism, and the prophets of the proletarian upheaval in Russia, began their experiments that had so ingloriously failed in the hands of their predecessor, Owen.

It must be said in this connection, however, and before we go any further, in justice to all parties concerned, that the Welsh philosopher,—having been well born, with an admirably balanced and blended temperament, and a good disposition,—came into an environment made by the Christian religion from hereditary forces started and fostered by Christianity, followed by Christian training, all of which, in combination, made him a Christian gentleman in spirit and behavior. He was better than his creed, as is so often the case with the special pleaders of our common humanity. His motives were good. He was altruistic, otheristic, philanthropic in his aims and plans. He was a Christian gentleman in everything but name and philosophy, a wholesome credit, when compared

to the atrabilious, sectarian saints, with whom Mr. Campbell had held his previous debates.

It may be doubted if any debate on theological and social issues in the whole history of human differences, was ever characterized by such gentlemanly and friendly conduct between the disputants as this one in Cincinnati between Robert Owen and Alexander Campbell, skeptic and heretic as they were. Mr. Campbell went the length in one of his speeches of apologizing for the necessity of referring to Mr. Owen as his "opponent." These two gentlemen referred to each other, throughout, not as *Ho Satanas,* "The adversary," but as "my friend" and "my worthy friend."

During a visit of the social philosopher to Bethany to arrange the preliminaries of the contemplated discussion, he and Mr. Campbell became acquainted and had much friendly conversation on topics of mutual interest. It was during this visit that an incident took place which furnished us Disciple preachers such a splendid introduction for a sermon on immortality, or the survival after death.

In one of their wanderings for exercise or recreation, the two great men came to the family burying ground on the hill, above the classic Buffalo when Mr. Owen said: "There is one advantage I have over the Christian—I am not afraid to die. Most Christians have fear in death, but if some few items of my business were settled, I should be perfectly willing to die at any moment." "Well," answered Mr. Campbell, "you say you have no fear in death; have you any hope in death?" After a solemn pause, "No," said Mr. Owen. "Then," rejoined Mr. Campbell, pointing to an ox standing near, "you are on a level with that brute; he has fed till he is satisfied, and stands in the shade, whisking off the flies, and has neither hope nor fear in death." At this, it is said, Mr. Owen smiled and evinced some confusion, but was quite unable to deny the justness of Mr. Campbell's inference.

There is another tradition, not as authentic as the one just related, to the effect that Mr. Campbell followed this friendly passage with an eloquent appeal to the philosopher to accept Christ, to become a Christian according to the Bible, and to run his benevolent schemes under the auspices of the Christian religion. Mr. Owen shed tears, but did not yield. Like the fish St. Francis preached to, when the sharks kept on sharking and the eels kept on eeling, very well pleased were they, but they kept on the old way; so Mr. Owen, as the story goes, was deeply impressed with Mr. Campbell's exhortation, but, like the sharks and the eels that were so profoundly moved by the eloquence of the priest, he preferred the old way of his Bolshevik benevolence and atheism.

The issue of this debate at Cincinnati was not communism, nor socialism in any of its phases. Mr. Campbell had no objection to the communistic philosophy or principle and none to the organization of society on a co-operative basis. In fact, he had spoken in terms of approval and praise of the sociological experiments and the benevolent aims and purposes of the societies his friend was trying to establish throughout the world and, at one time, had taken part himself in organizing a similar enterprise, minus atheism and free love, and *plus* God and the Christian religion.

It was the gross materialism, the naked, unadorned and shameless animalism of the social system, the barren east wind of atheism, that fired indignation and opposition in the mind of Alexander Campbell. He called attention to the fact that there was nothing in the boasted "social system" nor city of mental independence, worth a fig, that was not an unblushing plagiarism from Christian enterprises.

Mr. Dale, the father-in-law of Robert Owen, gave him his first ideas of the co-operative system, with its various arrangements and departments for the betterment of the working classes; and the first Christian church established on earth,

gave him an authoritative example in a social emergency, for a community of goods. His infidelity came from the French Revolution and his free-love from the tutelage of Dr. Graham, who had made himself conspicuous in that line of advocacy. Nothing distinctive had been contributed by Mr. Owen but his "twelve fundamental laws of human nature," the "gems" of his "casket," as he fondly called them, and they were as applicable to chimpanzees and pigs, as they were to human beings.

Mr. Owen's zeal in seeking a controversy with American Christianity was not, as we have already seen, the enthusiasm of humanity so much as the opportunism of a propagandist bent on capitalizing the standing of the Christian religion and the reputation of his opponent to advertise his bantling, the social system. This effort to drag the cosmic process of circumstances, over which, according to his philosophy, we have no control, at the tail of his social comet provoked the risibles of his audience, who saw through his little game to advertise his new irreligion of humanity, as an eye witness testified in the last chapter, by the senseless repetition of his twelve divine laws of human nature.

His opponent, of course, was not slow to point out that this effort to organize a pagan philanthropy in a Christian country by ignoring sin and cutting out the human nature it was trying to cure, was doomed to failure from the start. The fool assertion that all religions had been founded in ignorance and superstition, and were the fruitful causes of the world's misery, poverty, vice, crime and all the other evils that afflict us, was contradicted by the very first effort to put the principles of this Soviet philosophy into practical effect. The initial effort at New Lanark had not been projected nor operated on the basis of the twelve laws. The majority of the people who entered the organization were Presbyterians and Independents. There were churches of these denomina-

tions in the town, well attended by intelligent people, and Robert Owen himself contributed to the building fund of one of these churches. The "jewels" of his "casket" did not shine to much advantage in this first experiment of the social system.

When it came to New Harmony, Mr. Owen's most ambitious effort, pregnant, as he believed, with tremendous hopes for world redemption, the mountain had been in labor to bring forth not a mouse even—only "the twelve fundamental laws of human nature."

Believing the United States to be a more promising field for experimentation than priest-ridden, state-church dominated Europe, he purchased, in 1824, the property belonging to the Rappites, in Indiana, consisting of the village of New Harmony and thirty thousand acres of land, where, as the historian observes, he soon collected a community of several thousand persons, and where under the influence of zeal and talent, the co-operative system seemed, for a time, to realize the highest hopes of its advocates. Mr. Owen himself, as the same witness testified, constitutionally sanguine, was so confident of the success of his principles, as to assert that, in the course of three years, the city of Cincinnati would be depopulated by the migration of its citizens to New Harmony. A very short time, however, was sufficient to dispel this illusion and before the period fixed in his prediction had expired, this seemed more likely to be fulfilled in regard to New Harmony itself through the discords and disappointments which were constantly occurring and which drove off many to distant cities.

Those enthusiastic foreigners, including radicals and cranks of all ranks and orders, creeds and colors, ringed, streaked and striped, like Jacob's cattle, who had streamed across the Atlantic to bask in the sunshine of the new paradise of the city of mental independence as a matter of course, had contributed manfully to the disintegrating processes that were going on. They helped and hastened the transformation of the

"system" into a Donnybrook Fair, a veritable witches' cauldron of mental and moral confusion, in which their meetings for "spute" were split into factions, in which parliamentary law was disgraced, violent antagonisms developed, heads cracked, perhaps; a spectacle illustrating hate and hysteria more than concern for the new brotherhood of humanity—Bolshevism, in other words, before its time. Sinful, depraved and selfish human nature, unchecked by the redeeming and regenerating forces of the gospel, all consideration of which had been left out of his scheme by its benevolent founder, like wandering chickens, had come home to roost, when reds of the French Revolution and English secularism insisted on their right to function.

Mr. Campbell spoke of New Harmony, the land of promise, to which multitudes flocked with eagerness, having to witness the dissolving of the charm, and the social builders disbanding under the influence of the aweful realities of nature, reason, and religion. This result was chiefly due to the abolition of the marriage contract, and the appointment of nurses to take charge of the infants of the community. This furnished Mr. Campbell an opportunity to clench the nails he had driven into the coffin of the social system and the city of mental independence. He referred to the joys of the mother in having the care of her own offspring. "The smiles of her infant," said he, "the opening dawn of reason, the indications of future greatness or goodness, as they exhibit themselves to her sanguine expectations, open to her sources of enjoyment incomparably overpaying the solicitudes and gentle toils of nursing." He showed that the system, instead of being accordant with human nature, was at war with it, "aimed a mortal blow at all our ideas of social order and social happiness."

Well, Cincinnati is still on the map, with a great increase of population since the debate in 1829, and good prospects for the future, but where is New Harmony, the city of mental

independence? Echo answers, "Where?" And thereby hangs a tale fit to point a moral of the most suggestive significance. *Infidelity cannot organize.* Whether social or individual, it has nothing to organize on; nothing with cohesive vitality to hold things together. The shores of history are literally strewn with the wreckage of infidel attempts at organization. Its local associations or "lyceums," organized to promote the interest of "free thought" and "mental independence," go to pieces sooner or later, generally sooner, on the rocks of negation and the "twelve fundamental laws of human nature," but the little Bethels of the land, to say nothing of its great religious institutions, with all their limitations, with the everlasting "Yea" at the heart of their message, sing with Tennyson's brook:

> "For men may come and men may go,
> But I go on for ever."

There was in this debate the usual play and by-play, thrust and counter-thrust, repartee and numerous sallies, and many of these *jeux d'esprits* were singularly quick and felicitous. Two of these may be given that turned out in favor of Mr. Owen, who could laugh, and stand to be laughed at.

A certain Paul Brown wrote a book entitled *A Twelve Months' Residence in New Harmony.* He was said to be a dissatisfied grumbletonian who did up Mr. Owen and his system as with a cleaver. "We have just heard," said Mr. Campbell, "Mr. Owen's beautiful theory of the social system and Paul Brown's *Twelve Months' Residence at New Harmony*"—and he made a rhetorical pause, to give force to the intended sarcasm, in saying, "We'll show the thing in practice." Mr. Owen, who had hitherto received the thirty minutes' fire without smiling and with unwincing silence, saw what was coming after "Paul Brown's twelve months' residence" and interjected in the rhetorical pause, "is all a lie." "The effect," said an eye witness, "was electric, although whole numbers of sentences are required to relate it."

Another retort was still happier. Mr. Campbell had been discussing the evidences of Christianity from the fulfillment of prophecy. He gave the customary calculation of the duration of a prophetic year. Said he: "Mr. Owen denies the truth of prophecy and is, at the same time, a prophet himself. Aye, and a false prophet, too, as I shall prove. Few of you can have forgotten that, three years since, he prophecied in this very city, that within three years the houses would be tenantless and the inhabitants emptied into 'the city of mental independence.'" It was a home thrust and seemed almost too severe for the comity of a debate in which the parties constantly called each other "My worthy friend." Mr. Owen arose with his invincible equanimity of good humor. "At that time," said he, "being a prophet and availing myself of a prophet's phraseology, I spoke of prophetic years. Taking the exposition of my worthy friend, the period of my prediction includes something like 750 years. The prophecy will be fulfilled long before that." Very good, Mr. Owen, we join the laugh but cannot help wondering, at the same time, how many prophetic years of fabled duration it would take to evolve a social millennium out of the twelve fundamental laws of human nature, those sparkling jewels of your long forgotten casket.

# CHAPTER VII

## THE WAR ON SKEPTICISM

*Divine Revelation and Human Responsibility, the Real Issue of the Campbell-Owen Debate.*

I do not imagine it to be necessary to take up much of your time in proving that an infant at birth is quite incapable of knowing anything about his organization or natural capabilities. And yet his character and conduct proceed essentially from them; they are the only foundation of his virtues and vices. Over the formation of these, however, he has had no control, nor in the forming of anything that belongs to himself. No being, therefore, so created can ever be made to become responsible for his nature.

—*Robert Owen.*

My friend has said that the whole pith of the argument is concentrated in the corollary, that man did not make himself, *ergo,* is irresponsible. Now this dogma puts out of the world and out of human language, every idea of responsibility of any kind, or to any being whatever. All our social, moral, natural, and religious relations, obligations, and dependencies are at once annihilated by the besom of this sweeping corollary. —*Alexander Campbell.*

## CHAPTER VII

### THE WAR ON SKEPTICISM

WHEN Owen, like Goliath of Gath challenged the armies of Israel to send out a champion to join battle with him, there was but one David in the United States with courage and equipment and skill to take up the challenge and to meet the boastful giant in mental and moral combat.

Alexander Campbell, of Bethany, was the only man in the country equipped and qualified to meet defiant infidelity in the open, and to roll back the tidal wave of atheistic secularism threatening to inundate the world. The conviction had already been borne in upon him that skepticism had become, or was fast becoming, a greater menace to the Christian religion, than divisive and wrangling sectarianism. He had been made to realize, some time before this debate with Owen, that new weapons must be added to his controversial armory to meet this Philistine assault on another front.

No one knew better, or as well indeed, that the orthodox clergymen of the time were not armed to do successful battle with philosophical doubt and unbelief. They were so incased in the Saul's armour of doubtful theologies and fossil creeds that they stood a poor chance against the giants, who were bidding insolent defiance to the armies of the living God. Their religion, too, was either mystical or emotional and these are "powerful weak" when it comes to an exchange of argumentative blows. Mr. Campbell had taken note of the situation, and had for several years made careful preparation for the war with materialistic skepticism, which had already taken the East, and was rapidly advancing to the conquest of the West.

The Bolsheviki rationalism of the French Revolution had made horizontal advances in widening circles and perpendic-

ular progress up to the level of great educational centers like Yale and Harvard, and great intellectual personalities, like Thomas Jefferson, Aaron Burr, grandson of Jonathan Edwards, and Thomas Paine. There were infidel societies in the great American institutions of learning named after the leaders of the French Revolution.

In the days of the illustrious Timothy Dwight, there was the merest handful of students who were not afraid, or ashamed, to acknowledge themselves believers in Jesus Christ. Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason" had great vogue in those days; in fact, it was handed over the counters of bookstores in Cincinnati like hot cakes at a restaurant; and the same was true as far south as Lexington, Ky., long before Alexander Campbell preached his first sermon there in 1823.

Mr. Owen's New Harmony, the city of mental independence, had the finest library in North America. Its philosophic literature was unequalled. Its literary organ, *The New Harmony Gazette,* widely circulated, was edited and conducted, with distinguished ability, by a group of literary men and scholars, imported from Europe.

In the early numbers of *The Christian Baptist,* both of the Campbells had clashed with this coterie of Owenistic philosophers, who were as effectively overthrown as their master was subsequently in the oral debate in Cincinnati.

Alexander Campbell's six letters to a skeptic, published in *The Christian Baptist,* and collected into a brochure, in the judgment of the writer, was the best campaign document in the war with unbelief, which has seen the light for a hundred years. The nearest approach, in effectiveness at the time, was Walker's "Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation," and Nelson's "Cause and Cure of Infidelity," gems all in the field of anti-infidel literature. The six letters had a world-wide circulation, long after the oral debate, and have been the means of saving more people from "The gulf of dark despair," of agnostic materialism and rationalism, than any apologetic known to me.

The outstanding element, in all these debates is the fact, everywhere apparent, that Mr. Campbell had taken out a brief to defend against all comers, the Bible as a revelation of the divine personality and the Word of God for the edification and salvation of men. This was the fundamental issue in the fight with infidelity, as the interpretation and application of the Bible was in the war with sectarianism.

He submitted a proposition in the written discussion with the editors of *The New Harmony Gazette* in the form of a query or "problem," as he called it, and it probes to the heart of the question. Said he:

> You think that reason cannot originate the idea of an *Eternal First Cause,* and that no man could acquire such an idea by the employment of his senses and reason; and you think correctly. You think also that the Bible is not a supernatural revelation—not a revelation from the Deity in any sense. These things premised, gentlemen, I present my problem in the form of a query again. The Christian idea of an *Eternal First Cause* uncaused, or of a God, is now in the world and has been for ages immemorial. You say it could not enter into the world by reason and did not enter by revelation. Now as you are philosophers and historians and have all the means of knowing, *How did it come into the world?"* Two forms of a dilemma; on which will the philosophers of New Harmony unfurl themselves?

We are told that the surprise of the skeptics at finding Mr. Campbell to concur in the conclusions of their own philosophy, was greatly increased when they found their argument thus turned against themselves, and that, upon their own principles, they became at once involved in a palpable difficulty, from which there was no escape.

They had boasted greatly of their *mental independence* and imagined themselves to occupy a sphere of thought quite above that of the religious portion of the community, but, in coming into contact with Mr. Campbell, they found themselves confronted by a *mental independence* much greater than that which they boasted and they were quite at a loss as to how to meet his unexpected assaults.

Caring nothing for arithmetical defenses of the size and contents of Noah's ark, or for geological explanations of the

Mosaic account of the creation, in order to refute the usual puerile cavils of skepticism, he had attacked, at once, the *rationale* of their system. Overleaping the out-works, he had advanced upon the citadel. *The New Harmony Gazette,* after this taste of his quality, seemed for a time indisposed to renew the contest.

The contest, however, was renewed in the big mill at Cincinnati. The philosophers had been thinking the matter over in the interval, and, when Mr. Campbell read to his opponent the problem he had propounded to *The Gazette,* through the columns of *The Christian Baptist,* and came to the last line: "If the idea of God did not enter into the world by reason nor by revelation, how then did it enter?" Mr. Owen promptly interjected, "By imagination."

Mr. Campbell had taken that trip down the Ohio River, all the way from Virginia, loaded for bear and this was his first opportunity for a decent shot. He had tried in vain for two or three days, had appealed to Mr. Owen, to the moderators and to public opinion, to try to get some kind of a logical proposition, issue, attitude, statement, or what not, out of his supposed antagonist, with which he might grapple in workmanlike fashion. But nothing was forthcoming, till this unfortunate ejaculatory commitment by his opponent. The God idea, so long in the world, nobody knows when it came, entered in, not by reason, philosophy, nor revelation, but by the human imagination, and stayed when it got here, I suppose by ignorance and superstition.

Mr. Campbell opened the attack on this position with the grape and canister of his covenant theology, based on John Locke's sensational philosophy and theory of knowledge and no high explosive shell of the great war ever did a cleaner or more destructive piece of execution. "Indeed," said Mr. Campbell, in effect, "since when did imagination ever originate anything?"

With a few swift lightning strokes and flashes, Owen is overwhelmed with the unanimous testimony of philosophic writers, to the effect that imagination has no creative power.

It has the power of analyzing, combining, compounding, recasting, new-modifying all the different ideas, presented to it, but it has no power to function in the creation of new ideas. The first arrow, fired at the imaginary god of the "City of Mental Independence," was taken from the quiver of infidel Hume:

> Although nothing is so unbounded, in its operations, as the powers of the mind and the imagination of man to form monsters, and join incongruous shapes, and appearances and, while the body is confined to one planet, along which it creeps with pain and difficulty, the imagination and thought can transport us, in an instant, into the most distant regions of the universe. But, although our thoughts seem to possess this unbounded liberty, we shall find, upon a nearer examination, that it is really confined within very narrow limits and that *all this creative power of the mind amounts to nothing more than the faculty of combining, transposing, augmenting and diminishing the materials afforded us by sense and experience.*

Christian Locke and other philosophers back up infidel Hume in the assertion and demonstration that the idea of God could never have been created by the human imagination. Said Mr. Campbell:

> Now, if this be true and founded on a strict analysis of the human mind, and predicated of universal experience—how could man have imagined a God?" "Let us try the faculty of imagination," said he, "and prove by our own experience its *creative power.* We have but five senses: I would, therefore, ask Mr. Owen, and everyone present, if you can by any exertion of your faculties imagine a *sixth* sense? What would it be? If you were to imagine any other sense, it must be analogous to those you already possess. You might imagine a being like the fabulous Argus, with a hundred eyes; but fancy that you possessed an organ like that of Fame which would enable you to hear from a greater distance than the eye could reach; but, could you have imagined this unless you had derived the simple idea of hearing from your organ of hearing? But a sixth sense, unlike those possessed, cannot be imagined. Now if Mr. Owen cannot, from his five senses, imagine a sixth sense, how can he assert that a savage or philosopher could imagine God? But I call upon Mr. Owen to imagine and report to us a sixth sense.

However much imagining Mr. Owen may have done on the subject, he did no reporting. He went on reading his

manuscript, exhibiting the "jewels" of his "casket" and expounding his twelve divine laws of human nature. These laws, as applicable to a goat as to a man, utterly irrelevant to any point at issue, like the poor, are always with us to the very end of the discussion. They are all harmless enough except the one that denies, by implication at least, the freedom of the human will.

A theological and psychological expert, like Mr. Campbell, who on many a strenuous field, had unhorsed the necessitarian dogma of John Calvin, would have little trouble in dashing to the ground an infidel fatalism, that cut the nerve of moral responsibility; a favorite corollary, which Mr. Owen deduced from his views of necessity, or the fact that man did not create himself, nor his circumstances, was that neither praise nor blame, merit nor demerit can be ascribed to him.

Mr. Campbell pointed out, upon this assumption, that there could be no such thing as gratitude nor kind feeling, charity nor benevolence due to any human being more than to the fountain or rivulet, which slakes our thirst, nor to the tree which yields us its fruit. He showed that Mr. Owen's plan of cultivating the kind feelings would extirpate all feeling and that, as to sympathies, we would stand towards each other like trees in the forest. The artillery of the old mental philosophy of Locke and Hume and Mirabeau, was thus turned upon Mr. Owen and his New Harmony with great effect.

It is a noteworthy fact, at this point, that so far in the perusal of these bulky volumes of debate of hundreds of pages, I have not once come across the word psychology nor any of its derivatives.

Much water has flown under bridges since 1829 and many changes have taken place in the progress of scientific and theological studies. A static theology is giving place to a dynamic religion, the old mental philosophy to a new experimental psychology and the new conception of evolution has done yeoman service in the ongoing of things in all departments of human thought. The subliminal intellect, the two planes of concious-

ness, the subjective mind telepathy, the power of thought to project itself through space by means of rhythmic waves, like wireless telegraphy through ether, while modifying old positions materially in a few particulars confirm, in a remarkable way, the substantive contentions of Alexander Campbell, in his war against atheistic materialism, a hundred years ago.

The old controversy between necessity and free will, in the form in which it bulked so largely in this debate, has been put out of court in the new investigations of man's imminent powers. Mr. Owen's God, "Circumstances," being a poisonous serpent has had his fangs drawn by the new psychology. Man is not born free, the constitution of the United States to the contrary notwithstanding, but he is born with the capacity and the ability to achieve freedom.

The fundamental office and place of religion is to awaken this power within, and teach men that the supreme task of life is the *attainment* of freedom, the *achievement* of liberty by such means as divine revelation through Jesus Christ, puts into our hands or, rather, into our souls. Christ said to his contemporaries, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," and "If the truth makes you free you shall be free indeed." These people had not inherited freedom at birth, nor had they acquired it since. They were the bond slaves of ignorance, prejudice and sin, the devil's trinity for keeping men in bondage. If "the truth" of God, through the personality and power and divine idealism of Jesus Christ, could have found its way into their souls the darkness of ignorance would have vanished, the narrowness and meanness of prejudice rooted out, and all the minions of sin and death put to flight,—knowing the truth they could walk forth, free and righteous, in the universe of God.

Alexander Campbell's contention, with which he overthrew the materialistic and fatalistic philosophy of his opponent, may be summed up in a sentence: Divine revelation, an objective reality in the first place, and in the second, a subjective experience, through which the life and truth of God enters into the soul of man and makes him free.

## CHAPTER VIII

## THE GREAT TWELVE-HOUR SPEECH

*The Longest on Record, except One. Mr. Campbell's Masterpiece of Constructive Argument.*

When I hear persons caviling at the present state of things, and objecting to matters which they do not understand, I figure to myself a person stationed in a small room, say ten feet square, before which is passing continually a map ten thousand square miles in extent; ten feet of which only, at a time, can be seen through an opening in one side. In this small room he sits and peruses this map, for seventy years. For many weeks at a time he sees nothing but immense oceans of water; then apparently boundless forests; then prodigious chains of mountains; then deserts, flats, wastes, and wildernesses. Here and there a succession of beautiful country passes before his eyes. After contemplating this map for seventy years, he exclaims, What an irrational, ill-conducted, and incongruous looking thing is this! I have seen forests, deserts, and oceans, interspersed here and there with some specks of beautiful country. I must conclude that the Creator of this planet was either unwise or not benevolent. But, suppose, that on a sudden, the walls of his cottage fell down, and his vision was enlarged and strengthened so as to comprehend, in one glance, the whole sweep of ten thousand square miles; what a wonderful revolution would he undergo! Infinite wisdom and design now appear, where before he saw nothing but confusion and deformity. So it is with him who sits judging on the moral government of the world.

—*Alexander Campbell.*

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE GREAT TWELVE-HOUR SPEECH

WHEN Mr. Owen came to the end of his written piece, he had exhausted himself and was compelled to hand over the affirmative to his opponent. He had shot his bolt—bolts rather, twelve of them, and had shot them so often, as we have seen, that each additional repetition towards the last brought a puncturing guffaw from the audience.

It had long been manifest that Mr. Owen was no debater. He had no argumentative resources, no dialectic skill, no readiness of extemporaneous speech; he did not know reason and logic from a hole in the ground. He expounded his twelve laws, the basic elements of his social system, his Bolsheviki communism to the end of his paper covering the ground of twenty-two addresses, thirty minutes each in length, a rehash of the material he had used in a course of lectures he had delivered in New Orleans and in other cities of Europe and America.

In Mr. Campbell's twenty-second address he took the affirmative and commenced the historic speech of the century, not only in duration but in illuminative and constructive power of solid and brilliant argumentation. There is only one parallel in length and none in strength. A few years ago an Austrian Senator delivered a speech from the floor of the Senate chamber, in Vienna, in which he spoke twelve consecutive hours with only an interval of fifteen or twenty minutes for refreshments. Mr. Campbell's long address was really a succession of two hour speeches from 10 to 12 and from 2 to 4 for three successive days, aggregating twelve hours in all. As a phenomenon of physical endurance the Austrian leads, as an exhibition of intellectual and spiritual genius of massive scholarship, and argumentative power, Mr. Campbell's great de-

liverance probably outclasses anything of its kind on record. As an effort in the science of Christian apologetics it is worthy of careful study, even in this age of progress, when everything is put to the acid test of scientific investigation.

After a few preliminaries winding up the odds and ends of the old discussion, which had just been brought to a close, Mr. Campbell submitted his thesis, or plan of argument, under four heads:

1. I shall call your attention to the historic evidence of the Christian religion.
2. I shall next give a brief outline of the prophetic evidences, or rather the evidence arising from the prophecies, found in the inspired volume.
3. We shall then draw some arguments from the genius and tendency of the Christian religion.
4. And in conclusion, pay some attention to "The Social System."

I have before me the difficult task of literary condensation to such an extent, and in such proportions that I am afraid it will be quite impossible to do anything like adequate justice to this powerful statement of the Christian evidences. This twelve hour speech occupies over 200 pages, nearly half the volume, of the Campbell and Owen debate. There are so many brilliant sentences; destructive, argumentative blows; quotable passages; informative facts and testimonies; annihilating and dynamic statements that blow up the whole structure of infidelity in one fell explosive detonation; so much elaboration in demonstration of the spirit and of power, which one hesitates to spoil or desecrate by trying to condense, that I hardly know where to begin or how to proceed in the embarrassment of riches in the material before me.

The first proposition, taken up in this argumentative masterpiece, is the most vital and basic and determinative of the historical integrity of our holy Christianity: *"The volume called the New Testament was written by the persons whose names it bears, and at the time in which it is said to have been written."* One of the chief difficulties in approaching the solution of this question, is the state of mind of the investigator.

Mr. Campbell, with characteristic frankness, declares that religious men are afraid to call its truth in question, they are prejudiced in its favor. This religious awe acts as a sort of illusion on their minds. On the contrary, skeptics are prejudiced against it. That prejudice disqualifies them to judge fairly and impartially upon the merits of the evidence. The religious awe of the Christian and the prejudices of the skeptic are real obstacles in the way of both in judging impartially of the weight of evidence in favor of this or any other position, at the bottom of the Christian faith. Who ever heard of a disputant, in the whole history of controversy, religious and otherwise, having the intellectual and moral honesty and outspoken candor, to voluntarily admit that there might be blindness on his side as well as on the side of his opponent?

The sectarian partizan disputer of this world is always blind to his own prejudices, and those of his friends, and altogether open eyed and outspoken as to the sinful and shameful bias of the opposition. Alexander Campbell is the solitary exception as far as they are known to me in the "logomachic tilts" of the world. He took up the New Testament as though he had never seen the volume before, as though he knew nothing of its history, its contents, or its value; sustaining no other relation to it than that of an impartial, disinterested critic and investigator. This is the scientific temper and the only temper in which the solution of any problem should be approached.

His first proposition is concrete, it is one of fact:

**A book or collection of books, known as the New Testament *is now in existence.* This is indisputable. It is an old book. It has been here a long time. This equally is beyond dispute. When, where, how and by whom did these narratives, treatises, and epistles originate?**

To begin with, Celsus, the first Gentile infidel to write in opposition to the Christian religion, who wrote *eighteen* centuries from our day and *one* century from the time of Christ, *refers to the affairs of Jesus, as written by his disciples.* From the extracts which he makes in his book, there can be no doubt

but that he refers to one or the other of the four gospels. Mr. Campbell quotes the great Dr. Chalmers as commenting:

> The distinct assertion of Celsus, being an enemy of Christianity, that the pieces in question were written by the companions of Jesus, though even at the distance of a hundred years, is an argument in favor of their authenticity, which cannot be alleged for many of the most esteemed compositions of antiquity.

In these few words of infidel Celsus we have a cord stretching across nineteen centuries and attaching itself to the companions of Jesus, at the other end, and strong enough to bear the whole weight of the argument for the authorship and genuineness of the gospels. This, however, is only a meager beginning. Mr. Campbell called attention to a book, lying on the table before him, a volume of the writings of the primitive disciples of Christ, and first teachers of Christianity, the contemporaries and successors of the Apostles. Lifting up the volume, Mr. Campbell said:

> Here is the testimony of Barnabas, of Clement, Hermas, Ignatius and Polycarp—Barnabas the companion of Paul, Clement the Bishop of the congregation in Rome, whom all antiquity agrees to be the person mentioned by Paul (Phil. 4:3); Hermas whom Paul mentions in his epistle to the Romans; Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who flourished there A.D. 75, who took the oversight of that congregation thirty-seven years after the ascension of Christ. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, who had seen, conversed with, and was familiar with some of the apostles,—all these directly quote the historical or epistolary books of the New Testament—and refer to these writings as of general notoriety.

To these, the speaker adds the testimony of Papias, the hearer of John, of Irenaeus, Justin and others of their contemporaries. They either quote New Testament books, familiar to us, by saying, "as it is written," or by name. A few examples may be given. Barnabas, in his epistle says: "Let us therefore beware lest it come upon us *as it is written,* 'There are many called but few chosen.'" In the letter, written by Clement from Rome to Corinth, in the name of the whole congregation in Rome, to the whole congregation in

Corinth, say, from five hundred Christians in Rome to five hundred Christians in Corinth, the Sermon on the Mount is directly quoted and other passages of the testimony of Matthew and Luke. More than forty clear allusions to the books of the New Testament are to be found in the simple fragment of Polycarp, and Polycarp, be it remembered, was well acquainted with the apostle John. There are more quotations in Tertullian, of the second century, from the New Testament, than are to be found of the writings of Cicero in all the writers of two or three centuries. The poems of Virgil and Horace, the Annals of Tacitus, the orations of Cicero, the most popular works of antiquity, can not afford half the proof that they are the genuine works of the persons whose names they bear as can be adduced to prove the authorship of the memoirs of Jesus Christ written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

The case is strong enough, it is hardly possible to conceive of it being made stronger, and yet a great body of additional testimony of the same kind was brought in by Mr. Campbell. If he could have projected his vision sixty years into the future, so as to take in more recent periods of historical inquiry and research, he could have added solidity and strength more invincible to the basic proof of his first proposition.

The concessions and testimonies, forced from rationalistic critics in our time, have added immensely to the historic evidence for the authenticity and genuineness of New Testament books and the fundamental facts of Christianity. Harnack, for instance, the greatest of living masters as rationalistic critic and historian, in a book written twenty years ago or more, pushed the date of Paul's conversion back to within eighteen months of the resurrection of Christ. This is fatal to all mythical and legendary interpretations of Christianity. One year and six months is not time enough for myth and legend to get in their work. This makes Paul a witness of tremendous weight and importance, in his epistles which have come down to us. And what about the historicity of these Pauline epistles? All schools of criticism—rationalistic, destructive, mate-

rialistic, evangelical and all, are a unit in acclaiming the Pauline authorship of the four great "Epistles of the contention," as they are called—Romans, the two Corinthians and Galatians.

The two most significantly evidential facts of that early date were the resurrection of Jesus and the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, and these two monumental facts of the faith are buttressed irrefragably in these four great epistles of the contention, now universally admitted to be of Pauline authorship. If historical human testimony has either value or significance, the case was made out ninety-one years ago, but it shines in clearer and more powerful light at the end of the second decade of the 20th century.

If any one is interested in this basic issue of the faith and wishes to study the problems treated in one of the mightiest arguments ever constructed to prove the historical integrity of the New Testament and the factual reality of our Lord's resurrection, he could not do better than to concentrate his attention, for a time, upon this masterly apologetic. To summarize it in few words and at the same time retain its strength is altogether an impossible task.

The same is true of the argument from the fulfilment of prophecy. The present day student of Hebrew prophecy stresses the didactic and revelative functions of the prophet, and cares little for him as a prognosticator of future events. The apologetic scribe of our time touches lightly upon fulfilled prophecies as proof of the supernatural inspiration of the Bible, if indeed, he does not omit it altogether. This may be owing in part, at least, to the romantic, visionary, prophecy-mongering crank who makes a fool of himself and of the whole business of a divine revelation as it stands related to "the plan of the ages." But, notwithstanding the admitted fact of the changed attitude of scholarship to this branch of the subject, one can not read Mr. Campbell's great argument without being gripped by the old conviction of the evidential

weight and value of the undoubted fulfillment of these prophetic scriptures. We have space only for a single instance given partly in Mr. Campbell's own words.

It is Daniel's wonderful vision of Nebuchadnezzer's image and his interpretation of the strange phenomenon. In this vision there was a prospective view of the history of the world, from the time of the Chaldean or Assyrian monarchy down to the end of time. That this vision and prophecy might sufficiently attract the attention and interest the feelings of all the world it was vouchsafed to an Assyrian king, and explained by a Jewish prophet. The Jews and Gentiles are both concerned in it. Nebuchadnezzar had the vision and Daniel gave the interpretation. Thus Babylon and Jerusalem attest its truth. In this vision, and the interpretation, the four great pagan universal empires are most accurately defined. The *golden head* of the image represented the then existing Chaldean dominion; the silver *shoulders and arms* were the Medo-Persian dynasty; the brass, in the image, represented the *brazen coated* Greeks, the Macedonian empire, under Philip and Alexander; the iron *legs and feet* the Roman world dominion, the last of the universal brute monarchies of the world.

The prophet then speaks of the "stone kingdom" represented by the little stone cut out of the mountain without hands and thus supernatural in origin, spiritual in character, universal in extent, indestructible in destiny. It was to destroy the principle of universal world dominion by brute force, and it did. Take up your secular history, please, as the best interpreter of sacred prophecy, and you will find that all of these empires came and went just as Daniel said they would. Christ was born in the year 31 of Rome. The stone kingdom, the Messianic reign, Christianity, the gospel of divine revelation, was rocked in the Roman cradle for four hundred years, till it attained potency and power to overthrow the last and greatest of the world dominions, and, with the overthrow of the organization went the autocratic principle on which it was founded.

Strenuous efforts have been made by brute violence to bring back brute world dominion, but in vain, including the pan-Germanism of the late war. I may be reminded, and probably will be, that modern criticism has pushed forward the date of the book of Daniel to near the close of the Persian period, about two hundred years before Christ. Upon this assumption the impersonator of Daniel had two world monarchies behind him as history. At the same time, if this be admitted, it must be borne in mind that he had three ahead of him, the Macedonian, the Roman, and the Christian, stretching over six hundred years to the end of Rome. This validates the prophecy as sound argument for the inspiration of the prophet. The stone kingdom is still here, the Christian religion, as represented by the Christian church, is the world's only universal empire. There will never be another 'til the Millennium puts in an appearance.

## CHAPTER IX

## MR. CAMPBELL'S THIRD ARGUMENT IN THE CAMPBELL-OWEN DEBATE

*The Intrinsic Reasonableness and Practical Fitness of the Christian Religion. High Explosive Shells Wreck the Last Vestige of the Social System.*

A Christian population is emphatically, in practice, a population preying upon each other, and living very generally in a state of unnatural anxiety, or useless and surplus property, in the midst of hourly deception and hypocrisy; hating and disliking each other because they cannot think and feel alike, having been taught the notion that they may think and feel as they please. It is everywhere a population of inequality of condition, and, necessarily, of pride, poverty, envy, and jealousy. It is a population in which tenfold more of exertion and anxiety is required from each to produce the misery they experience, than is necessary to secure a full supply of the best of everything for all.

—*Robert Owen.*

Christianity has its direct and its indirect influences upon society. The direct or the reflex light of this holy religion affects almost every man in the region where it shines. It shines into the hearts of some, and in their lives it is reflected as from a mirror upon all around. And thus some are Christianized, more are moralized, and all are, in some good degree civilized by its light. A single pious man in a village is a restraint upon the wickedness and profanity of all the villagers. I have known some instances, and have heard of others, where a general deterioration of morals has followed the death or removal of a good man out of a small town or neighborhood. There is a charm, there is an indescribable influence in the genuine fruits of Christianity, which, when exhibited in living Christians, the most abandoned are constrained to respect. Hence an increase of genuine Christians is one of the greatest national blessings—if, indeed, it be a truth that righteousness exalteth a nation.

—*Alexander Campbell.*

# CHAPTER IX

## MR. CAMPBELL'S THIRD ARGUMENT IN THE CAMPBELL-OWEN DEBATE

AFTER the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament had been built up on foundations of unimpeachable historic testimony, and the prevision of the ancient prophets, shown in the fulfillment of their prophecies, to be out of the range of our ordinary human powers, and therefore of divine origin and inspiration; he proceeds to his third evidential proposition: "The genius and tendency of the Christian religion." This argument of demonstration focuses the appeal on experience, the source of all real knowledge. It makes evident the fact that the evangel of the Christian message is the only force in the world that goes manfully to the root of the difficulty, the solution of the sin problem, which Owen and the philosophy of his social system either ignored or denied.

All such brainless and bogus schemes of world betterment, more numerous and brazen now than in the days of the Campbell and Owen debate, start out by shutting their eyes to the cancer of moral evil, the most radical and destructive of human limitations. They put a cheap economic plaster over the running sore, bank up against it a gospel of dirt, and then proceed to acclaim the failure of Christianity, and the origin of all religions in ignorance and superstition. Over against this atheistic whangdoodleism, the gospel of Jesus Christ honestly and bravely faces the fact of sin and all the depravities of moral evil and the animal nature; faces the problem with the only solution, redemption through Christ, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, deliverance from the power and practice of sin, by the life of God in the soul of man, this life within manifesting itself in a righteousness without, that walks humbly, deals justly, and loves mercy.

Mr. Campbell contended, with characteristic eloquence and power, that genuine Christianity is founded upon the most philosophic view of human nature. He declared:

> It aims not at reforming or happifying the world by a system of legal restraints, however excellent, but its immediate object is to implant in the human heart, through a discovery of the divine philanthropy, a principle of love which fulfills every moral precept ever promulgated on earth.

Again he said:

> Here is the grand secret. The religion of Jesus Christ melts the hearts of men into pure philanthropy. It converts a lion into a lamb. It has done this in our time in countless instances. Mr. Owen only dreams of reformations. Christianity alone changes, regenerates and reforms wicked men. The materialists declare their system *"Cannot make a wicked man good."* Skepticism never converted a wicked man since the days of Celsus till now. Mr. Owen cannot produce one instance. But Christianity, taking hold of the heart of man, not by law, but by love, not by letter, but by favor, has converted millions of the worst characters into the very best. Yes, the religion of Jesus sheds abroad in the human heart the love of God; and that love, purifying the heart, overflows in all good actions—kind, humane, benevolent, not only to the good, but to the evil. This is the true philosophy. Correct the spring, the fountain, "make the tree good," engraft a new scion on the old stock; enfuse new life; warm the heart by the wonderful love of God, exhibited and sealed by the blood of his Son. Let this love, this pure benevolence, this genuine philanthropy but reach the soul of man and then all is pure within and moral without.

How does this sound in contrast to the irresponsible and soulless animalism of Owen and his successors? As we have already seen, Mr. Owen's peculiarity in answering arguments and rebutting evidence was the idiosyncrasy of not answering and rebutting at all, except the *quid nunc* method of assertion and declamation. He asserted and declaimed and many times repeated his assertions and declamations. If at any time he was tempted to essay a direct reply, he only laid himself open to a new and crushing rejoinder, as for instance, he replied to the argument on the miraculous by saying he

did not believe in miracles because he had never seen one. "Miracles were contrary to experience," he declared. That of course, reminded his opponent of the King of Siam who ordered the Dutch navigator, who asserted that water in Holland occasionally became passable for men and horses, to be punished for lying. His majesty, living in the tropics had never seen ice, he concluded, therefore, that congealed water thick enough to bear men and horses was contrary to experience. It *was* contrary to *his* experience, but not to the experience of the Dutchman who had walked and driven horses across many a frozen stream in his native land. Poor Mr. Owen did not have the penetration to say with his philosophic master, David Hume, that it was easier to believe that the witnesses to miracles were mistaken, than to believe the alleged wonders to which they testified. And, this would be quite true, if we were always compelled to take the line of least resistance; but there are exceptions to that ancient materialistic rule, and the most conspicuous exception is the well established historic miracle of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If we begin with the presupposition as Renan did, and all materialists must, that miracles do not occur; that the supernatural is the unnatural and the impossible, then neither the witness of experience nor the testimony of observation can have the slightest weight with them. No matter if mountain high and irresistible in weight, they brush it aside with a wave of the hand as unworthy of a moment's consideration.

Naturally one cannot help wondering as he reads this long and mighty speech of Alexander Campbell as to the impression this cumulative and crushing weight of reasoning is going to have on the mind of his opponent, and what line of defense and rebuttal he will take up in reply. If, however, we have caught our Ephraim's point of view and his relation to his idol, we can readily anticipate the attitude he will take towards arguments based on experience and observation of facts, if they happen to contradict his assumptions. He coolly ignored them as worthless and false, and as confirmation of his

unbelief. Here are two sentences he wrote in response to Mr. Campbell's twelve hour speech:

> Then, my friends, my impressions are that Christianity is *not* of divine origin; that it is *not* true; and that its doctrines are now anything but beneficial to mankind. On the contrary, my impressions are deeply confirmed that its miracles and mysteries are of man's contrivance, to impose on the great mass of mankind, who have never yet been taught to reason; to enable the few to govern the many through their interested hopes and fears for the future; and to induce the many to prostrate their minds before an order of men, who through these means can easily keep them in subjection to the powers that be.

The old infidel theory of imposture for the selfish ends of the impostor. No decent infidel, since Owen, has dared to repeat that charge against the Christian religion. One of the rawest and most ridiculous of the grievances of our benevolent skeptic was the practice of weekly preaching without the privilege of reply by the audience. He refers to this priestly outrage upon human liberty again and again. With loud voice he said:

> My friends, I do say again, that so long as this weekly preaching, without reply from the congregation shall be allowed to proceed, you and your posterity will be kept in the very depth of darkness as you are at this hour.

He declared again on the same page:

> This kind of preaching has no other effect—it can have no other in practice than to perpetuate the dark ages of ignorance and hypocrisy.

Mr. Campbell on a Sunday during the debate preached a sermon of marvellous power, as he did at Lexington after the McCalla debate, lifting a great audience onto a higher mount of inspiration and transfiguration than it had ever experienced before. Of this sublime outburst of sacred eloquence in the exposition of holy truth and divine righteousness, Mr. Owen coolly observes:

Never did I see so much fine talent so miserably misdirected. Never did I see human beings so ready to receive poison, under the undoubting supposition that it was good and wholesome food.

And as if that was not enough, he went on to more of the same kind. Said he:

Now, I am persuaded that neither Mr. Campbell, nor the larger part of his congregation, were in the least conscious that throughout his sermon on Sunday morning he reasoned as falsely and spoke as much error as could well be spoken in the same length of time.

These were the impressions made on his mind and the only wonder is why he did not spot and specify these errors and make a slight effort at least, to show why and wherein they were erroneous. He had the coveted privilege of reply, and many opportunities, for the lack of which the church-going world had gone to wreck and ruin. Why didn't he show 'em how? If the congregations of that day had been made up of people of the same or similar mental type as Robert Owen and Co., and this world redeeming privilege of talking back had been granted, the only use made of it would have been something like this:

Mr. Preacher, you are as blind as a bat, your sermon is all wrong, I do not believe one word you have said. It is the appeal of cunning, craft, and selfishness to ignorance, prejudice, and superstition. Excuse me, please.

If church assemblies, meeting to worship God and receive instruction in the divine way of life, had been turned into quiz clubs and debating societies, the church would have gone the way of all the earth long before New Harmony and the City of Mental Independence had so much dying grace granted to them.

During intervals, between speeches, in the long address of three days' duration, Mr. Owen industriously devoted himself to composition; so that when Mr. Campbell stopped speaking Mr. Owen was ready to begin reading. He had committed enough material to paper to last him through three thirty minute addresses. He paid a high compliment to his opponent

in truth, his praises soon banked into eulogy and then passed to the ecstatic and flaming heights of panegyric. He spoke of Mr. Campbell's great learning, marvellous industry, extraordinary talents, shining gifts, manifest sincerity, honesty, self-control, and scrupulous fairness in debate; lifted him onto a pinnacle by himself, as the only Christian minister in America, with the courage of his convictions, with the moral bravery and sincerity to come forward in defense of his imperilled religion. He thanked Mr. Campbell for buckling on his armor and coming to the front, as it gave him a long coveted opportunity to save the world by the proclamation of his twelve fundamental laws, and the promulgation of the principles of his social system. After this, he went on to use the language I have just quoted, which he pointed and tipped with the polite declaration that his "friend" hadn't a ray of light and was as blind as a mole. Of course, he did not blame poor benighted Mr. Campbell. He could not and dare not, according to his own philosophy, blame anybody for anything. Man being an automatic machine, an organized clod with no soul but his breath, and no heaven but the grave, virtue and goodness deserve no credit, vice and wickedness no discredit.

Over and over again, with tiresome iteration and reiteration, did Mr. Owen repeat the fundamental doctrine of all infidelity—if negation can be called doctrine—the denial of free agency and moral responsibility. Almost as many times did his opponent shatter this pretentious pedestal of unbelief to its base. He said, to give an instance or two:

> Mr. Owen contends that a society can exist without an idea of obligation or responsibility. This is contrary to all the past records of time and all present experience. A banditti of highway robbers could not exist without the ligament of laws, and the tie of moral obligation. Without them it would be impossible for them to concert a scheme of co-operative plunder.
>
> "For not since Adam made his verdant apron
> Has man with man in social union dwelt,
> But laws were made to draw that union closer."

No society has ever existed or ever can exist without some sense of responsibility and obligation. We talk of a *lawless banditti,* but this is to be understood *sub mode.* They are not without laws, and rigorous ones too, among themselves; they well know that they could not exist without them.

Whether the doctrine of free will is true or false in metaphysics, whether man is a free agent or a mere automaton, there is one thing absolutely certain, and that is that no association of men or organization of society, can be held together for a single day without the practical recognition of individual freedom and moral responsibility. Whatever may be the abstract proposition of philosophy this is the concrete reality of experience and it did not take many years either for Mr. Owen to find it out.

After the eulogistic appreciation of Mr. Campbell and his powers, and the wholesale interpretation of Christendom as blind and rotten, he proceeds to the eleventh exposition of his twelve divine laws, the basic elements of his animal social system. A humorous impulse seizing Mr. Campbell he arose and remarked that he would beg leave to suggest that these laws should not be commented on more than eleven times. In spite of the protest of his opponent and the laughter of his crowd, the founder of the city of mental independence went on holding up to admiration the twelve jewels of his casket. But Mr. Campbell got even with him and it was the unkindest cut of all, when he proceeded, in the last speech but one, to parody the twelve laws by substituting goat and kid for man and child. He wrote a new title:

*"The twelve fundamental laws of brutal nature on which Robert Owen bases a change of society that will form an entire new state of existence."* I am sorry there is not space for all the amended "laws." Half of them will do as specimens of the whole:

1. That a goat, at birth, is ignorant of everything relative to its own organization, and that it has not been permitted to create the slightest part of any of its natural propensities, faculties, or qualities, physical or mental.

2. That no two kids, at birth, have yet been known to possess precisely the same organization; while the physical, mental and moral differences between all kids are formed without their knowledge or will.

3. That each individual kid is placed at birth without its knowledge or consent within circumstances which acting upon its peculiar organization, impress the general character of those circumstances upon the infant kid and goat; yet that the influence of those circumstances, to a certain degree modified by the peculiar natural organization of each individual goat.

4. That no kid has the power of deciding just what period of time or in what part of the world it shall come into existence, of what goat it shall be born, what peculiar tricks it shall be trained to, or by what other circumstances it shall be surrounded from birth to death.

5. That each individual goat is so created that when young it may be made to receive impressions to produce either true ideas or false notions and beneficial or injurious habits and retain them with great tenacity.

6. That each individual goat is so created that he must feel, according to the strongest impressions, that can be made on its feelings and other faculties while its feeling in no case depends upon its will.

Once, in a conversation with me, a Bolsheviki Owenite made this speech:

If I have food in me stomach, a rag on me back, a roof over me head, a dollar or two in me pocket, and a reasonable prospect of a day's work ahead—that is all the religion I want, all the God I believe in.

My reply was:

If a Billy goat or a baboon could talk, that is just what he would say almost word for word. He would embrace your religion and acknowledge your God. Are you nothing more and nothing different from a Billy goat or a baboon on two legs?

# CHAPTER X

## CAMPBELL-OWEN DEBATE CONCLUDED

*Choice Selections from the Written Introduction and Mr. Campbell's Speeches.*

Now I must tell you that a problem will arise in the minds of those living five hundred or a thousand miles distant, who may read this discussion, *whether it was owing to a perfect apathy or indifference on your part, as to any interest you felt in the Christian religion, that you bore all these insults without seeming to hear them.* In fine, the question will be, *whether it was owing to the stoical indifference of fatalism, to the prevalence of infidelity; or, to the meekness and forbearance which Christianity teaches, that you bore all these indignities without a single expression of disgust.* Now I desire no more than that this good and Christian like deportment may be credited to the proper account. If it be owing to your concurrence in sentiment with Mr. Owen, let skepticism have the honor of it. But if owing to your belief in, or regard for, the Christian religion, let the Christian religion have the honor of it. These things premised, my proposition is *that all the persons in this assembly who believe in the Christian religion or who feel so much interest in it, as to wish to see it pervade the world, will please to signify it by standing up.* (An almost universal rising up.)

Here Mr. Campbell says, You will have the goodness to be seated.

Now I would further propose, *that all persons doubtful of the truth of the Christian religion, or who do not believe it, and who are not friendly to its spread and prevalence over the world, will please signify it by rising up.* (Three arise.)

Mr. Owen rises.

Gentlemen moderators—It has just occurred to me that I had forgotten to tender my thanks to you for your presence and superintendence on this occasion, which I now beg leave to do. And I may add, I am much pleased with Mr. Campbell's little maneuver of the test, because I discover it pleases him and his friends. Truth requires no such support. (*Candles called for.*)

—*Closing Scene of The Campbell and Owen Debate.*

# CHAPTER X

## CAMPBELL-OWEN DEBATE CONCLUDED

### Christianity and Infidelity Contrasted

WHEN we ask, 'What has Christianity produced in the soil of our fallen nature?' or, 'What has Christianity done for man?' we do not institute a comparison between a Christian and a hypocrite but between a sincere Christian and a sincere pagan or between a sincere Christian community and a sincere infidel community. We do not institute a comparison between a half converted Christian and a half bred infidel. We ask for a well developed Christian and a well developed infidel and then, without debate, submit the question to a well qualified and disinterested umpire. We are willing to test the tree by its fruits. Pretended Christians and pretended infidels, or Christians clothed in the attire of infidels, or infidels, attired in the garb of Christians, form no logical contrast and come not within the purview of our premises, our reasonings or our conclusions. This would be mere trifling, with a grave and transcendantly important subject.

"I have never read nor heard a philosophical, rational, logical argument against Christianity; nor have I ever seen or heard a rational, philosophic or logical argument in favor of any form of skepticism or infidelity.

"Jesus Christ was, and is, a *person;* not a thing, not a doctrine, not a theory. Infidelity is not a person, not a thing, not a theory. There may be a theory of it, but it is not a theory. It is a state of mind, an intellectual or a moral imbecility. It is a spiritual jaundice, sometimes green and sometimes black. They cannot be philosophically, logically, rationally compared. They are neither logical nor literal contrasts. The infidel is but the incarnation of a negative idea.

He is absolutely but a mere negation. He stands to Christianity as darkness stands to light. Is darkness anything? Is blindness anything but the loss of sight? Is unbelief anything but repudiation of evidence? One might as rationally load a cannon to fight against darkness as to dispatch a syllogism against a chimera.

"Jesus Christ was a real person, and had personal, positive, attributes. He had a real and positive character, unique, original, transcendent. It was as fixed, as positive, as radiating as the sun in heaven. The originality and unity of his character is all-sufficient in the eye of educated reason to claim for him a cordial welcome into our world, and to hail him as the supreme benefactor of our race.

"To my mind it has long been a moral demonstration, clear as the sun that no one could have drawn a character such as that of Jesus Christ from all the stores of human learning, from all the resources of human imagination. The simple character of Jesus Christ weighs more in the eyes of cultivated reason than all the miracles he ever wrought. No greater truth was ever uttered than these words 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, also.' No mortal ever could have said so. The wisdom and science and learning of the world, compared with his, was and is, and evermore shall be, as a glimmering spark to a radiant star, as a glow worm of the twilight, in contrast with the splendors of a meridian sun. It is only in the dark we can admire a glow-worm. We can not see it when the sun shines. But we might as hopefully lecture to a blind man, on the philosophy of light, as address the mere sensualist, the visionary, or the dogmatic simpleton on the originality, unity, transparency, beauty and grandeur of the character of Jesus Christ. An animal man will not look, and, therefore, he cannot see the light; the true light which shines in the face of the Lord Jesus Christ. He affirms that he sees, but he sees not what he affirms.

"Now what has dreamy skepticism or presumptuous unbelief to offer as an apology for itself, in vindication of its position, or as a substitute for Christianity? The light of nature, the light of reason, the dictates of conscience! What flimsy sophistry! Where is the light of nature found? And who in pagandom has eyes to see it! This light of reason, these dictates of conscience, where are the found? Show me, produce for me one example of the power of this light of nature, this light of reason, these dictates of conscience! Show me this eye of reason with this light of nature, working faith in God; working out Christian civilization, refinement of manners, temperance, justice, public virtue and humanity; to say nothing of piety and the love and admiration of the purity of God, and I will lend a willing ear to such a demonstration. But the annals of the world and the experience of the present generation afford no such spectacle.

**Our Debt to Christian Democracy**

"As I have said we are indebted for all the great improvements in society to the philosophy of Christians and not to the philosophy of skeptics. A free, just and equitable government has always developed the powers of the human mind. Political, or civil liberty, is essential to the expansion and development of human intellect. All history is appealed to in proof of this. Just in proportion as civil liberty has been enjoyed, have mankind in all ages, distinguished themselves by the vigor and expansion of their minds. Let any man contrast the ancient Greeks, who were free, with their contemporaries, the Persians who were under a despotic government, and he will see the influences of free institutions, in the genius, eloquence, and daring enterprise of the former compared with the latter. Should he ascribe the superiority to their being of a different race, or to the influence of climate, let him turn his attention to the Lacedaemonians and their helots or slaves. When the Messenians were two centuries

in slavery, one Lacedaemonian possessed the mental vigor and valor of half a score of them. But only draw the contrast (in 1829) which our country presents and mark the difference between the citizen and the slave. The employment of civil liberty is shown from reason and experience, from the faithful page of history, to give a new impetus to all the faculties of man. To this liberty, then, we are constrained to ascribe the great improvements in all the arts of civilized and social life. But to see the connection between this liberty and these free institutions, and Christianity, we have only to ask, 'To whom are we most indebted for improvements in governments?' The reformation from popery gave the first shock to the despotism of Europe. The labors of the reformers, and the more recent labors of Milton the poet, and Locke, the philosopher, have done more to create the free institutions of Europe and America, than the labors of all the skeptics from Celsus to my friend Mr. Owen.

**The Future Life, the Real Issue**

"But we cannot sit down without admonishing you to bear constantly in mind the inconceivable and ineffable importance attached to the investigation. It is not the ordinary affairs of this life, the fleeting and transitory concerns of today or tomorrow; it is not whether we shall live all freemen, or die all slaves; it is not the momentary affairs of empire, or the evanescent charms of dominion—Nay, indeed, all these are but the toys of childhood, the sportive excursions of youthful fancy, contrasted with the questions: *What is man? Whence came he? Whither does he go?* Is he a mortal or an immortal being? Is he doomed to spring up like the grass, bloom like a flower, drop his seed into the earth, and die forever? Is there no object of future hope? No God, no heaven, no exalted society to be known or enjoyed? Are all the great and illustrious men and women, who have lived before we were born, wasted and gone forever? After a few short days are fled, when the enjoyments and toils of life are

over; when our relish for social enjoyment, and our desires for returning to the fountain of life are most acute? Must we hang our heads and close our eyes in the desolating and appalling prospect of never opening them again, of ever tasting the sweets for which a state of discipline and trial have so well fitted us? These are the awful and sublime merits of the question at issue. It is not what we shall eat, nor what we shall drink, unless we shall be proved to be mere animals; but it is, shall we live or die forever? It is beautifully expressed by a Christian poet.

> Shall Spring ever visit the mouldering urn?
> Shall day ever dawn on the night of the grave?

**The Triumphs of Skepticism**

"When skepticism triumphs in any heart, the hope of immortality is banished. It crowns the tyrant Death forever on his throne, and seals the conquests of the grave over the whole human race. It wraps the tomb in eternal darkness, and suffers not one particle of the remains of the great, the wise, and the good of all ages, to see the light of eternity; but consigns, by an irreversible doom, all that was admired, loved and revered in man, to perpetual annihilation. It identifies human existence with the vilest reptile, and levels man to the grade of the meanest weed, the utility of which is yet undiscovered. Man's origin and his destiny are to its ken alike fortuitous, unimportant and uninteresting. Having robbed him of everything which could make him dear to himself and proud of his existence, it murders all his hopes of future being and future bliss. It cuts the cable and casts away the golden anchor; it sets man adrift on the mighty, unfathomable and unexplored ocean of uncertainty to become the sport of wind and waves, of animal passion and appetite; until, at last, in some tremendous gust, 'he sinks to everlasting ruin?' Say then, proud reasoner, of what utility is your philosophy? What your boast?

"You boast that you have made man ignorant of his origin and a stranger to himself. You boast that you have deprived him of any real superiority over the bee, the bat or the beaver; that you have divested him of the highest inducements to a virtuous life, by taking away the knowledge of God and the hope of heaven. You boast that you have made death triumphant and not only over the body; but the intellectual dignity of man and that you have buried his soul and body in the grave of an eternal sleep, never to see the light of life again! O skepticism! is this thy philosophy—is this thy boasted victory over the Bible? And for this extinguishment of light and life eternal, what dost thou teach and what bestow? Thou teachest us to live according to our appetites, and dost promise us that in thy Millennium man shall live in a paradise of colonies, almost as industrious, as independent and as social as the bees. Well then dost thou preach with zeal and exert thy energies; for thy heaven is worthy of thy efforts and the purity of thy life is justly adapted to the high hopes of eternal annihilation.

**Closing Paragraph and Final Scene**

"Before we dismiss this assembly, I beg leave to express my sensibility, my admiration of the marked and courteous attention which has been paid by this community to this discussion. I must again repeat that I have never seen any assembly convened, upon any occasion, which has all through exhibited the same good order, the same complaisant behavior, and the same unremitted attention. I feel indebted to, and will ever feel a high respect for the citizens of this city, for the favorable circumstances which they have created for this debate, and especially to the gentlemen, who have so politely and patiently presided over this meeting.

"But I should be wanting to you, my friends, and the cause which I plead, if I should dismiss you without making to you a very important proposition. You know that every encomium that has been pronounced upon your exemplary

behavior, will go with the report of this discussion. You will remember, too, that many indignities have been offered to your faith, to your religion, and that these reproaches and indignities have been only heard with pity and not marked with the least resentment on your part. Now I must tell you that a problem will arise in the minds of those living five hundred or a thousand miles distant, who may read this discussion. *Whether it was owing to a perfect apathy or indifference on your part, as to any interest you felt in the Christian religion, that you bore all these insults without seeming to hear them. In fine, the question will be, whether it was owing to the stoical indifference of fatalism, to the prevalence of infidelity; or to the meekness and forbearance which Christianity teaches, that you bore all these indignities without a single expression of disgust.* Now I desire no more than that this good and Christianlike deportment may be credited to the proper account. If it be owing to your concurrence in sentiment with Mr. Owen, let skepticism have the honor of it. But, if owing to your belief in or regard for the Christian religion, let the Christian religion have the honor of it. These things premised, my proposition is, *that all the persons in this assembly who believe in the Christian religion, or who feel so much interest in it, as to wish to see it pervade the world, will please to signify it by standing up.*" (An almost universal rising up.)

Here Mr. Campbell said, "You will have the goodness to be seated. Now I would further propose *that all persons doubtful of the truth of the Christian religion, or who do not believe it, and who are not friendly to its spread and prevalence over the world, will please signify it by rising.*" (Three arise.)

As a result of the oral and printed debate thousands have been reclaimed from their skepticism, and thousands that needed encouragement and corroboration have been confirmed.

# CHAPTER XI

## THE CAMPBELL-PURCELL DEBATE ON THE ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGION

*Held in the Sycamore Street Meeting House, Cincinnati, Ohio, from the 13th to 21st of January,* 1837.

## PROPOSITION I.

The Roman Catholic Institution, sometimes called the "Holy, Apostolic, Catholic, Church," is not now, nor was she ever, catholic, apostolic, or holy; but is a *sect* in the fair import of that word, older than any other sect now existing, not the "Mother and Mistress of all Churches," but an apostacy from the only true, holy, apostolic, and catholic church of Christ.

*Mr. Campbell affirms.*
*Bishop Purcell denies.*

# CHAPTER XI

## THE CAMPBELL-PURCELL DEBATE ON THE ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGION

EIGHT years after Mr. Campbell had overthrown, in his debate with Robert Owen, agnostic materialism, and Bolshevik infidelity, of French revolutionary origin, in the City of Cincinnati, he was called upon by its citizens to return in the capacity of a warrior to meet another aggressive and threatening foe to American civilization and the Christian religion. These good citizens were apprehensive that Roman politico-ecclesiasticism was a more serious foe to our liberties and the spiritual progress of our people, than any conceivable number of social systems and cities of mental independence.

The events leading up to this discussion, on the Roman Catholic Religion, furnished obvious pointers in that direction. A college of teachers had been organized in the city, composed of educators and teachers of all grades and classes. The public sessions of this association were devoted to lectures on education and discussions on school subjects, and educational problems in general. On Oct. 3, 1836, a Dr. Wilson gave an introductory lecture in which he recommended the Bible as a universal school book. Bishop Purcell, who had been a teacher before he became a bishop, was present, and took emphatic exception to the suggested introduction of the Bible into the common school system of the country. Alexander Campbell who had come to the city to deliver one of the lectures of the course, was also present and was taken by surprise at the boldness of Purcell in advocating the expulsion of the Holy Scriptures from the public schools.

Upon the delivery of Mr. Campbell's lecture the next evening on "Moral Culture," in which he connected the

rapid march of modern improvements with the spirit of inquiry produced by the Protestant Reformation, Bishop Purcell took strong exception to this position, openly affirming that "The Protestant Reformation had been the cause of all the contention and infidelity in the world." Observations of this kind were palpably out of order in a convention where religious discussion was not allowed. Mr. Campbell at once informed the Bishop of his readiness to meet him in a public investigation of the questions raised by his criticism, at a proper time and place, but in the college he could not defend his assertion, except in its relation to education. Bishop Purcell did not then accede to the proposition to debate the point at issue, but declared himself in favor of free discussion; saying that his word was the word of God. Mr. Campbell then announced that he would deal with the subject the following Monday evening in the Sycamore Street Christian Church.

Bishop Purcell was present when the time came—strange unprecedented conduct for a representative of papal infallibility—no imitators since—didn't work well enough to establish a precedent—Mr. Campbell invited him to reply, and offered to divide time with him in further discussion. He declined, but requested an adjournment till the next evening, on which occasion, he spent most of his time in a fierce tirade against Martin Luther and the Reformation. At the close he declined further debate. The next evening Mr. Campbell addressed an overwhelming audience in Wesley Church on the issues involved and gave notice of his purpose not to prosecute the matter any further, summing up the points treated in six propositions, which he declared himself able at any time to sustain. The next day the following communication was put into his hands:

To the Rev. Mr. Campbell: Cincinnati, Ohio, Oct. 13, 1836.

The undersigned citizens of Cincinnati having listened, with great pleasure, to your exposure and illustrations of the absurd claims and usages of the Roman Catholic church, would respectfully and earnestly request you to proceed immediately to establish, be-

fore this community, the six propositions announced at the close of your lecture last evening. This request is made under the conviction that the present state of feeling in this city, and the critical state of the country with reference to Romanism, demand this, and will fully justify such a course, and also with the expectation that it may result in much good to the cause of Protestantism in the West.

This letter, we are informed, was signed by a large number of the most respectable citizens and the following P. S. was added:

One half of the city could be obtained would time permit. Fearing your hasty departure induces the above persons to hand it in without delay.

Mr. Campbell, according to his biographer, Dr. Richardson, after giving a brief statement of the circumstances, which had led to the introduction of the subject, and restating his propositions, frankly consented to sustain them publicly against Bishop Purcell, or any of the Catholic priesthood, stipulating only, that in order to give proper publicity to the matter and to afford time to fulfill his existing engagements, the meeting should be postponed till about the beginning of the New Year, when he would, either in a discussion or in public lectures, endeavor to maintain the propositions he had submitted. Bishop Purcell having subsequently consented to meet Mr. Campbell, the propositions were arranged as follows:

1. The Roman Catholic institution, sometimes called the Holy Apostolic Church, is not now nor was she ever Catholic, apostolic or holy; but is a *sect* in the fair import of that word, older than any other sect now existing; not the "mother and mistress of all churches," but an apostasy from the only true apostolic and Catholic church of Christ.

2. Her notion of apostolic succession is without any foundation in the Bible, in reason or in fact; an imposition of the most injurious consequences built upon unscriptural and anti-scriptural traditions, resting wholly upon the opinions of interested and fallible men.

3. She is not uniform in her faith nor united in her numbers but mutable and fallible as any other sect of philosophy or religion—Jewish, Turkish, or Christian—a confederation of sects under a politico-ecclesiastic head.

4. She is the "Babylon" of John, the "Man of Sin" of Paul, and the "Empire of the Youngest Horn" of Daniel's sea monster.

5. Her notions of purgatory, indulgences, auricular confession, remission of sins, transubstantiation, supererogation, etc., essential elements of her system, are immoral in their tendency and injurious to the well being of society, religious and political.

6. Notwithstanding her pretentions to have given us the Bible and faith in it, we are perfectly independent of her for our knowledge of that book and its evidences of a divine original.

7. The Roman Catholic religion, if infallible and unsusceptible of reformation, as alleged, is essentially anti-American being opposed to the genius of all free institutions and positively subversive of them, opposing the general reading of the Scriptures and the diffusion of useful knowledge among the whole community, so essential to liberty and the permanency of good government.

Before we enter upon a detailed analysis and interpretation of the discussion of these propositions, a few lines must be written as to the present day issues between these opposing outgrowths of original Christianity.

In the first place, and as a matter of fact, Romanism is ecclesiasticism—an ecclesiastical and hierarchical organization, finely articulated and carried to its highest terms—it worships an institutional God. As a system it interprets religion in terms of ecclesiastical and sacerdotal machinery, and not in terms of New Testament Christianity.

Protestantism, on the other hand, is dogmatism, it substitutes a theological creed for an institutional system. It exchanged an infallible church for an infallible book and got the better of the bargain, but soon found, by experience, that an intellectual creed, founded on an intellectual interpretation of the Bible, had less power to unify and no more power to save and make character than the sacraments and ceremonies of the church. Over against these two considerations Christianity is not ecclesiasticism, and is not dogmatism; it is *idealism,* which finds its center of unity and power in the personality of Jesus, the Christ, who was the supreme historic incarnation of the ideal, the realization of which in experience and life makes men Christian and religion Christianity.

## CHAPTER XII

## ORIGIN OF THE DEBATE, WITH APPRAISEMENT

*Discussion of the First of the Purcell Propositions. Rome Sectarian, like the Rest of Us—Only More So.*

I stand here as the defender of Protestantism, and not as the assailant of Catholicism. * * * Permit me here to say, most emphatically, that I have not the slightest disposition to use terms of opprobrium in speaking of his church; or of the worthy gentleman who opposes me in this debate.

—*Alexander Campbell.*

If it can be proved that the Catholic church had not these characteristics, we admit she is not the church of Christ. I shall go to trial on this point. If she has ever ceased to teach the whole doctrine of Christ, to diffuse over all nations, the true Christian precepts, or if she has not had a larger body of professors, than any of the sects, that separated in every successive age from her communion, then will I yield the question.

—*Bishop Purcell.*

# CHAPTER XII

## ORIGIN OF THE DEBATE, WITH APPRAISEMENT

THE late Hugh Price Hughes declared, a generation ago, that there were three Catholicisms and three corresponding Catholic groups or parties in England; Roman Catholic, Anglican Catholic, and Christian Catholic. Each one of these groups has a center of unity peculiar to itself. Roman Catholicism centers in the pope and in the pope alone. Anglican Catholicism has its focus in the crown of the empire, and in the crown alone. Christian Catholicism has its focalizing center of gravity and unity in Christ, and in Christ alone.

The church, and the church alone is the religion of Catholics, Anglican and Roman. The Bible and the Bible alone the religion of Protestants. Christ and Christ alone the religion of Christians. Catholics, so called, accept Christ but they put the church in front of him; they accept the Bible but they bury it under the church. Protestants accept Christ and then lose him in the book that reveals him. They accept the Bible, and believe it to be the inspired word of God and then proceed to interpret it, not in terms of personal idealism and practical service, but in terms of dogmatic theology and a hide bound intellectual creed.

Christian Catholicism belongs to the church and gives it all needful reverence and appreciation, as one of God's great instruments in world redemption; it receives and loves the Bible as another of God's great and most vital agencies for enlightenment, edification, and salvation; and, as taught by church and Bible, it puts supreme accent on the ideals of personality and character, beginning with Jesus Christ and ending with the day of judgment. The law of progressive development and the process of the suns have not and will not cease their operations till we have a new Protestantism

which will not be Protestantism at all, in the old negative acception of the term, but a new and greater Christianity, that will reinstall Jesus, our Divine Lord, in his old place of dominion as the symbol, center and basis of unity, glory and catholicity.

At the time of this debate, when an infallible book was to measure arms with the corrupt and arrogant claims of an infallible church, a movement had already commenced in the heart of the Campbell reformation to put the human life of God, the divine man, the infallible person in the place of first honor and power. This Christological interpretation of the faith is credited to Walter Scott and subsequently, in its evolution and application, to Isaac Errett and J. H. Garrison, the two great editors of the movement. The Disciple contingent of our day, as a whole, has not fully comprehended the magnitude and bearings of this truth; but its prophetic and forward looking men, of whom there are many, are in the school house, their books are open, the light is shining through the window, the teacher has arrived and the issue, I am sure, is not doubtful.

And, still more wonderful to relate, the ponderous and unchanging Catholicisms are beginning to move. A recent distinguished representative of the Anglican Catholic communion declared: "A monopoly which claims a sole validity in sacramental grace, will be resisted unto death, by all who believe in the absolute freedom of the grace of God"—a dead surrender to the Christian Catholics of the British Empire. In the latest utterances of the Roman pontiff, his holiness declares: "Man precedes the state." Well, well, are you not aware, old man of the Vatican, that that kind of talk is elegant democracy, but rotten autocracy, in which line of things you are the chief of sinners? Why didn't you whisper that to the Kaiser and the Emperor before they unchained the dogs of war and deluged the world in blood? Have you, too, been sipping the deadly potion of Americanism and primitive Christianity? The old popes, who exercised temporal domin-

ion in the good old days of the holy Roman Empire, would turn over in their graves at such talk as that.

But let us push back the car of time for nearly a century and drop off at Cincinnati station long enough to witness the great historic struggle between theological giants of 1837, on the old lines of the post-reformation doctrine of an inerrant book, and the dark age assumption and delusion of an infallible church; and see what kind of a contribution it made to the situation of 1920 as I have just described it.

1. The Roman Catholic institution sometimes called the Holy Apostolic Church, is not now, nor was she ever catholic, apostolic, or holy; but is a *sect* in the fair import of that word, older than any other sect now existing; not the "mother and mistress of all churches," but an apostacy from the only true, apostolic, and catholic church of Christ.

A drastic proposition for two Irishmen to discuss—two masters of "logomachy" from the inflammatory and disputatious Emerald Isle! Alexander Campbell was of Scotch Irish extraction from combative and progressive North of Ireland. Bishop Purcell emanated from the bog trotting and superstitious south. It may be "a long way" from London to "Tipperary," but it is much farther, in terms of ecclesiastical geography, from Belfast to Cork! A wide space and stretch of territory in the "no man's land" between the entrenched host of Orange Protestantism of the north, and the enditched armies of Romanism in the bog lands of the south; so much space indeed, that the Gettysburg of this uncivil war had to be transferred to the new world, where bigotry and mobocracy did not operate automatically, to break up all decent attempts at public discussion.

We have already gone far enough in this "battle of the giants," to discover that Purcell was far removed from the ordinary type of Roman Catholic official. And he had individuality and a sense of freedom, sufficiently developed, to announce his belief in free discussion, and courage enough to show his faith by his works, by actually engaging in it. In

the four hundred years of Protestant history, it has not found another priest of his grit and calibre. There has been but one debate on the Roman Catholic religion. The priestly method of meeting an opponent from Martin Luther on, has been to put the enginery of persecution in motion against him, or to stir up a mob to deal with him by "direct action." The Cincinnati Bishop has had no polemic successors, and no disciples nor imitators.

In personality, culture, scholarship, argumentative ingenuity, and controversial ability, the Catholic bishop is the greatest of Mr. Campbell's opponents. He was weak in logic, but powerful in rhetoric. He was strong in history, and in the idealization of history, when it suited his purpose but, powerful weak in the interpretation of history. He knew little of the Bible and misinterpreted the little he knew. For the first three or four days he was the equal of Robert Owen in politeness and courtesy; after that he wabbled and fell into the ditch of prejudicial appeal and personalities, made smooth by Mr. Campbell's two seceder Presbyterian opponents. The consciousness, perhaps, that he was not winning his fight, might have had something to do with the Bishop's loss of the suavity and poise that characterized him in the first days of the discussion.

In the opening speeches there is nothing of particular human interest, except that both speakers were called to order by the chairman. Mr. Campbell had branched out in the explanation of certain preliminaries, which the chairman did not think germane to the points at issue. At about the same point in his opening address, the bishop did the same thing, in pretty much the same way, for which he was called down by the chair. Smiling, he looked around at Mr. Campbell and said, "Now we are even." This put every body at their ease and the audience in a good humor, a good beginning for the first day's debate.

Mr. Campbell's first affirmative required him to furnish proof to make good the assertion that Roman Catholics were

sectarians, and Romanism, in its institutional aspects, was sectarianism. A very easy proposition to establish, one would imagine. Any man with half an eye can see that there are three outstanding and differentiating marks of sectarianism, that can only be hidden from view by self-blindness, superinduced by ignorance and prejudice; a sectarian *name,* a sectarian *creed,* and a sectarian *spirit.* Rome has all three of these identifying marks of the sectarian beast, *writ large.*

Mr. Campbell's first argument was based on the name *Roman Catholic.* Roman is a descriptive adjective, modifying or qualifying the noun catholic. The adjective Roman is sectional and limited, the noun Catholic is universal and unlimited, and that gives us a sectional universal, a particular general, a limited unlimited, a national international, a county or a cabbage patch, in terms of world wide extension—How does that sound? Like a contradiction in terms, doesn't it? If the Roman church is Roman it is not Catholic, and if it is Catholic, it is not Roman. Purcell sought to evade this failure to subtend analogies, by saying that Roman, as a designating term, is not used with any reference to its sectional or geographical limitations, but only with reference to its suitability, as a name for an institution that has its center and place of power in the capitol city of the great Roman Empire. So the name was arbitrarily expanded to fit the larger term catholic, or was adopted as a mere handle without any particular significance. And this is not the worst. It was bad enough to universalize a local term, but it was much worse to localize a universal term. Not only did Romanism monkey with the name of the church by universalizing a sectional adjective, but still more sinfully did it monkey and manipulate by sectionalizing the universal noun.

In other words, it unblushingly sectarianizes the universal term catholic, by applying the name of the whole to a section, or part of the whole. To this bit of egoistic sectarian insanity there is one historic parallel in politics and geography. Sir Henry Parks, prime minister of New South Wales, in the

old colonial days of Australia, coolly proposed, in a nationalization scheme of his, to change the name of New South Wales, one of the five colonies to Australia, the catholic, or universal name of the five states taken together! One can easily imagine what the other four colonies would have to say to a ridiculous proposition of that kind. Alas, that only institutions bearing the name of Jesus Christ, and claiming to have been founded by him, can be guilty of such bug house performances, such transparencies of bigotry and blindness. But this is not the worst in the sectarian count against Romanism. Its unmistakable object and purpose in choosing the name Roman, was to separate, mark off, and distinguish itself from the Greek communion, from which it was a split, schism, sect, or section. Latin Christianity, the equivalent of Roman popery separated itself from the Greek church in a preposterous row over two letters in a Greek word, and then proceeded to choose a peculiar identifying appellation, an exclusive denominational title, after the characteristic style of every other sect ever organized on the planet. If the truth was ever told in human words, Alexander Campbell told it, when he affirmed that the Roman Catholic institution was a sect in the fair import of that word, an old sect it is true, and a big one, but nevertheless a sect, manifest from the beginning, by its sectarian name.

The second "peculiaristic" of a genuine sect, is as a matter of course, a sectarian *creed* or theology, a dogmatic formulation as sectarian as the name that covers it. Rome, by the help of Greek philosophy, Roman law and Oriental mysticism, constructed a metaphysical creed on the basis of the Athanasian formula, the most senseless document that ever effluviated from an addled human brain. How is one to reconcile an "incomprehensible" tritheism (three Gods) in one breath with an equally "incomprehensible" unitarianism (one God), in the next, and then be damned for not believing both of them at the same time? Then what about the idealization of tradition as a basis of historic religion because it cannot find a fulcrum strong enough, in the Bible, for its sectarian lever

to rest on? The Schism and sect peculiarities of Romanism are just as numerous and glaring, and as menacingly outstanding as in any of the provincial cults and sects of Protestantism; more, indeed, than any, unless it be our Roman Catholic high church Protestants, the Baptists of the south and west of this country, who take the same attitude to all unity problems, as his Holiness the Pope, because they share his conception of the church and its functions.

Rome, like the evangelical sects of Christendom, is orthodox and Catholic on many of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, but these are overlaid and underlaid and shot through, up and down, with ecclesiastical and theological peculiarities, not catholic in any allowable connotation of the term. The papal administration of church order is not catholic. It was borrowed from the pagan Roman Empire and not from any sect of religion. Five of her seven sacraments are not catholic; the other two, baptism and the Lord's Supper, having, in fact, the appearance of catholicity, have been so changed, corrupted and perverted that they are not the baptism and holy communion of the New Testament at all, but the sectarian substitutes and priestly inventions of an apostate religion. Her priesthood is an uncatholic, unspiritual, unethical compound of Judaism and paganism with only a slight homeopathetic tincture of Christianity mixed up in the dose. It came originally through Moses, from Egypt and Semite heathenism and is subversive, absolutely of the catholic priesthood of all believers so plainly and indisputably taught in the New Testament. A Romish priest may "function serviceably," as the representative of an ancient sect, in front of Jewish and pagan altars, but there is no place for him in the religion of the New Testament; absolutely none. He is an interloper and a nuisance on the holy ground of New Testament Christianity. Sacerdotalism was as foreign to the words of Christ and the apostles and the New Testament church, as the metaphysical theories of so-called Christian Science, or the wild and woolly correspondence doctrines of Immanuel Swedenborg. It is a fundamental right of the human soul

to approach God on a straight open line of access to his presence, without human intermediaries, to mumble and block the way. It has been known for a long time, to all intelligent people, and will be better known to us before we get through with this debate, that there can be no cessation of the war, and no reconciliation between a sacerdotal and a spiritual interpretation of the Word of God, until one of them makes a "U. S. Grant" surrender to the other. The papal system and the creed on which it was founded have been built into a sacerdotal wall, encircling an arrogant and supercillious hierarchy with the claim of exclusive divine authority to administer the sacraments and sacramental grace, and all the rest of it.

The bigotry of Romanism, which is the distilled essence of the sectarian spirit, is too unhidable, unescapable and blazingly apparent to need proof. The partisan spirit of intolerance, hate, and hostility, bigotry, prejudice, and persecution has always characterized the priest and priestly institutions, as opposed to the prophet and prophetic ideals. Man is a born partisan anyway and when he is brought up in a sectarian environment, belongs to an infallible church, receives his spiritual pabulum from an inerrant creed, is fed with a spoon in the hands of an immaculate priest; is it any wonder that he should come to look with ill-concealed repugnance upon his neighbor who has the hardihood to differ from him, and his holy mother church; and that Red Rods, Torguemadas, and Hildebrands should come about, who believe they are serving God when they torture or kill the body of a heretic in the interest of the salvation of his immortal soul?

All of the Catholicisms, Roman, Greek, and Anglican, are anti-catholic and anti-Christian in the sect spirit of exclusiveness, narrowness, and selfishness, that constitutes, always and everywhere, the essential ingredients of their composition.

There are some big battles looming just ahead of us in this debate, in the fields of history, tradition and biblical interpretation which will make us sit up and take notice.

## CHAPTER XIII

## THE CAMPBELL-PURCELL DEBATE: MORALS AND DOCTRINE

*Rome's Unholiness and Shocking Sinfulness Proves Her More Apostatic than Apostolic.*

Indeed, I know not why the spirit of God should be promised through such a wretched and polluted channel as the popes of Rome, rather than to operate from heaven in all its holy influences upon those, who by its appointment, are chosen and ordained by prayer, fastings, and imposition of hands, as deacons or bishops of the Christian congregations. We lose nothing then, in abandoning the leaky and sinking ship of pontifical authority in the Roman Catholic church.

—*Alexander Campbell.*

Nothing, my friends, gives me more faith in the genuineness and truth of our holy religion, than when in reviewing the history of these disgraceful enormities, I find the church, in the very midst of scandal, enough to blacken and overthrow any earthly institution, still supported and upheld by the almighty hand of God. A church that has stood through all that the gentleman has laid to the charge of the merely mortal men who have presided for a season over its destinies. A few of them erred in morals, but none of them in faith; sound doctrine and sound morals were seen and admired, during these sad eclipses, and infidel nations were, during that passing obscurity in Rome rejoicing in the beams of the orient sun of justice, heralded by Catholic missionaries. Let this be borne in mind when my learned opponent undertakes to prove that the pope is the sea-serpent! And let my Protestant friends understand that the Roman Catholics detest immorality as much as they can, wherever it may be found; and most of all, where superior virtue was required by exalted station. We too had labored for a reformation, not of God's truth, for it needed none, but of men's morals which are always liable to corruption.

—*Bishop Purcell.*

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE CAMPBELL-PURCELL DEBATE: MORALS AND DOCTRINE

THE demonstration of Rome's sectarianism—a sectarianism of the most odious and repugnant type—in the second half of Mr. Campbell's proposition required him to probe to the heart of the difficulty, and to find the seat of the trouble in a moral and spiritual lapse from the essential norm and fact of New Testament Christianity. The baptism of the church, in the blood stained waters of politics and worldliness and Satan's most approved brand of selfishness, made for an ethical rottenness, which made Romanism or something like it, inevitable.

But, before we reach some striking illustrations of the kind of holiness Rome believed in, and practiced, we must allow Mr. Campbell to sum up the historic argument against Rome as a sect and mother of sects. It will be a damaging abbreviation I know, but all our space will allow is a condensed statement of facts:

1. The church of Christ was not originally known by the name Catholic.

2. The Roman sect was not the church of the first six centuries.

3. The second fact is demonstrated by a third. She had no Pope nor supreme head for full six hundred years after Christ.

4. The seven historic councils of the first six centuries were all Greek, not one of them Latin.

5. All ancient ecclesiastical historians were Greeks. Such as Eusebius, Socrates, Scholasticus, Evagrius, Sogomon, Theodoret.

6. The most ancient and primitive church fathers and theologians were Greeks.

7. In these seven church councils, before the split with Rome, there were 1486 Grecian bishops and only 26 Roman bishops pres-

ent. They were called by Greek emperors held in Greek cities and employed in the solution of Greek problems.

8. The leading ecclesiastic terms of all the ancient offices, customs and controversies, almost the entire theological and technical vocabulary of the Latin church are Greek. For example, "Pope," "Patriarch," "Synod," "Ecclesiastic," "Schism," "Schismatic, "Heresy," "Heretic," "Catechumen," "Hierarchy," "Church," "Chrism," "Exorcism," "Diocess," "Presbytery," "Trinity," "Mystery," "Mystic," "Catholic," "Canon," and so on. Almost the entire ecclesiastical and theological terminology of Rome was borrowed from the Greeks. Doesn't this one fact, to say nothing of the other seven, fully prove priority and seniority of the Greek church, as it does that of the Greek language over the Latin? It is then a clean cut fact of history that the Greek church was the mother and the Latin church the daughter and that the Latins split from the Greeks and made the first great historic rent, or schism, or sect of Christendom? If this is not so, we must adopt a new rule of history and logic, and say that the mother gets her language from the daughter and that the tail does actually wag the dog.

What did Purcell have to say in reply to all these crushing facts, what effort did he make to parry these knock out blows? Well, he abused the Greeks in the first place. He declared that the whole Hellenistic fraternity, philosophic, discursive, speculative, imaginative, were restless and reckless and rotten and the originators and purveyors of all the heterodoxies and heresies, from the beginning; that the brave Romans (26 of them to 1486 Greeks) went over into Greek territory to settle Greek disputes; that the Romans were dominant, as shown by the fact that one Roman Bishop presided over one of the seven councils.

Mr. Campbell promptly reminded him that this last assertion was historically of doubtful disputation and asked for the proof on which it was supposed to rest. No proof was given because none existed, and so the brainy Greeks, heretics all, as brainy people usually are, were left in possession of the field. Mr. Campbell exploded the Bishop's logic by an ilustration:

What would the gentleman prove by the fact if it be a fact, that a Roman bishop presided over one of these councils? That, therefore, they were Roman councils? How would such logic pass

with us with regard to the house of representatives? His argument runs thus: Mr. Henry Clay was once Speaker of that House. Mr. Clay is from Kentucky, therefore, the House of Representatives were all *Kentuckians!* This would be exactly the pith of the logic we have heard.

When he came to the last part of his proposition, "She is not holy," wishing with characteristic courtesy and kindness to handle, as tenderly as he could, the susceptibilities of his Roman Catholic auditors and fellow-citizens he said:

I am impelled by a sense of duty, and not by any unkind feelings toward such of my fellow citizens as belong to that communion to attempt to prove that the church of Rome is not holy. I would not, heedlessly nor needlessly, offend against the feelings of an Indian, a Hindoo, or a pagan in his sincere devotions, how absurd soever they might be. Much less would I wound any one who professes the Christian religion under any form; but in serving my contemporaries, in redeeming my pledge, it has become necessary to investigate the grand pretentions of this fraternity, that exclusively arrogates to itself the title of holy.

Mr. Campbell did not take up, at this point, the vices of the clergy and the shocking morals of the popes, admitted and described in detail by cardinals Barronius and Bellarmine, and not denied by Bishop Purcell; nor did he mention the persecuting ferocities and abominable cruelties perpetrated through the centuries, by the holy church. He quoted a single text, from the last named of the two cardinals, which, unblushingly, avows a doctrine that must, forever, make the Roman Catholic church anti-Christian and unholy. It is expressed in these unforgettable words: "Wicked men, infidels and reprobates, remaining in the public profession of the Romanish church, are true members of the body of Christ."

The comment of history on this authoritative utterance of doctrine is that the holy church, in the most thoroughgoing manner lived up, or down rather, to its creed. Visit Roman Catholic countries, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Italy, South of Ireland, Mexico, and South America, and cities, in Protestant countries, dominated by the Roman Catholic religion; note

the radical differences between types of civilization in the Catholic and Protestant cantons of Switzerland, as Charles Dickens did, and see in what loving concord and sweet uncloyed, harmony, doctrine, and practice, faith and morals, march hand in hand, together in the holy mother church; depending on the Confessional and the fires of purgatory to square accounts in the end!

One of the church's favorite methods of propagating its peculiar conception of holiness is to bury the New Testament in the tomb of a dead language, Jerome's *Latin Vulgate.* There is not a vernacular New Testament in existence, by the authority or consent of the Roman Catholic church. There is, however, the Rhemish Testament published by the authority of a portion of the church and from it we can find the doctrine of Bellarmine, just referred to, explicitly taught in notes, appended by the same gentleman of the red hat. In his comment on John 15:1—*"Every branch in me"* etc.—he says: "Christ hath some branches in his body mystical that be fruitless; therefore ill-livers also may be members of Christ's church." Ill-livers, (mark it) may be members. This is an authoritative, infallible utterance, often repeated and everywhere avowed as the true doctrine of the Roman Catholic church. *"Ill livers,"* wicked men, infidels, reprobates, vicious characters, those guilty of crimes of every enormity and color, may then continue members of the Roman church, while they acknowledged the pope and priesthood, and made profession of faith in the Catholic Church. According to this atrocious conception of ecclesiastical and sacerdotal religion, all that happen to be born in Catholic countries, infidels, atheists, hooligans and all the total depravities, belched up from the underworld slums of great cities, are enrolled in her holy communion. Her gates are wide as the human race. It is all church and no world with her. Purcell, like all the rest, had no other conception of a church but the church of a nation, with temporal power and a political head. Holy Catholic Church!

Well, this whole business reminds me of the French savant's definition of a lobster, "A lobster," said he, "is a red fish that walks backward." Whereupon another savant ventured the observation that the definition of the learned gentleman was first-class, in every particular, except that a lobster was not red, not a fish and did not walk backwards. Holy Catholic Church, exhaustively accurate, scientific and true, except it is not holy, not catholic and not a church. Mr. Campbell did not tell this story for the all sufficient reason that it did not exist in his day. On the contrary, not to make his drive too fast and furious, he declared, at this juncture of affairs, that the Roman Catholics in the United States are probably the best body of Catholics in the world, especially those who are native citizens.

No doubt, there is an obvious reason for this. Every man in existence is the product of three forces, organization, education and circumstances; or, in more scientific phrase, heredity, environment and training. Every individual Catholic, born and reared in America, has been raised and moulded under a predominating Protestant environment, and by contact with the democratic institutions of our American civilization, and is, therefore, largely out of touch and, practically, out of sympathy with the autocracy and the worst of the morally corrupting influences of the Roman papacy. Popery is the quintessence of autocracy, political, social, and spiritual. It is irreconcilably and hopelessly at war with American democracy and with the American conception of authority. There is something in current Romanism, known as Americanism, which had barely commenced to function at the time of this debate. The Pope and all the red hats in his kingdom have been making strenuous efforts to expel this American virus from the blood of holy mother church. It is a dangerous symptom and must be arrested at all hazards. It means improvement and progress, and infallibility has no place for intellectual expansion or moral elevation or change of any kind. "Always the same," and hence the spirit of Christian

liberty and democratic freedom and progress must be resisted to the last ditch and the last man.

It has been inhibited, prohibited, interdicted, contradicted, condemned, denounced and bulled by the vatican authorities, but to no purpose, except to make bad matters worse. The "will to power" and the strong determination to arrest this cosmic process of evolution and Americanization is found in the consciousness that American democracy has no more use nor place for a pope than New Testament Christianity has for a priest. Yes, Mr. Campbell was doubtless right. The American Catholic is the best, best because his circumstances have made him the most enlightened progressive and liberal, but it is a long way to Tipperary, "a long way to go," and it will be a long time before he can make the Roman Catholic church, with its autocratic head, a safe place for American democracy.

I have spoken of Bishop Purcell's innocency of any thing in the nature of logic, from premises to a conclusion, that will hold water. I have given an illustrative instance in this paper, and will proceed to give another as it fits in well in this connection.

Mr. Campbell had fixed the birthday of the Roman Catholic church on the 16th day of July, 1054, the occasion of the final separation of the Latin from the Greek church. In reply the Bishop said:

> Therefore Mr. Campbell must admit that the church from which she—the Roman Church—separated, was the true and uncorrupted church of Christ.

Mr. Campbell replied:

> No, that is what logicians call a *non-sequitiur,* it does not follow. The gentleman seems to reason as if it were invariable that when one sect separates from another, the body from which it separates, must necessarily be the true church. This is not logical. A new sect may spring from the bosom of the worst sect on earth; but does this prove that the mother sect has piety, character or authority? Neither does it follow that in the year 1054 the Greek church, though the mother or the sister of the Roman, was the true church of Christ.

When it becomes necessary I may show that both the Greek and the Roman schisms had, long before 1054, been separated from the apostolic church.

It became necessary and he showed in the most illuminating, compelling, and edifying part of this debate, that both of these boasted Catholicisms, Greek and Roman—as though there could be two at the same time, apostatized from the original apostolic church, many long centuries before they separated from each other in the summer of 1054.

## CHAPTER XIV

## THE CAMPBELL-PURCELL DEBATE: ORIGIN OF THE PAPACY

*The Bishop Contends for a Petrine Papacy and Lays it on the New Testament. Mr. Campbell Counters the Assault on Peter and Gives Place of First Honor to Boniface III, in the Year* 604 *A. D.*

## PROPOSITION II.

Her notion of apostolic succession is without any foundation in the Bible, in reason, or in fact; an imposition of the most injurious consequences, built upon unscriptural and anti-scriptural traditions, resting wholly upon the opinions of interested and fallible men.

*Mr. Campbell affirms.*
*Bishop Purcell denies.*

# CHAPTER XIV

## THE CAMPBELL-PURCELL DEBATE: ORIGIN OF THE PAPACY

THERE are textual battles in this debate that have the ring and tang of a real fight. One of the most notable of these exegetic tilts was a grammatical dispute over the antecedent of a pronoun in our Lord's triple question to Peter: "Lovest thou me more than *these?*" What is the antecedent of the pronoun *these,* was the point at issue. "Lovest thou me more than these?"—What? This opened up a field of ambiguity large enough for a gigantic scuffle. The pronoun might refer to anyone of three things:

1. Lovest thou me more than these other disciples love me?
2. Lovest thou me more than these fellow apostles of yours?
3. Lovest thou me more than thou lovest these fish—these commercial and worldly trappings to which you have returned as a means of livelihood?

Purcell's contention that Peter was the first pope, compelled him, of course, to choose the first, and to say, that Peter being the first official primate of the Apostolate and founder of the Holy see, must, of necessity, possess the supreme qualification of love for service and spiritual leadership, beyond any of his contemporaries or fellow Apostles. Mr. Campbell called attention to the impossibility of this Romanized interpretation. Peter was not omnipotent nor was he a telepathic mind explorer. He did not, and could not know whether he loved Christ more or less than his disciple companions. There would have been little sense, and less fitness, in asking Peter such a question at this time. Mr. Campbell, in his search for a proper antecedent of the pronoun, preferred the last of the three constructions: Lovest thou me more than thou lovest these fish,

these boats, nets, apparatus or these victuals and this worldly employment? The contextual circumstances, leading up to the interview that prompted this interrogation of Peter, indicate clearly enough the correctness of Mr. Campbell's construction.

Purcell replied by a mocking reference to it as a "fish story," characterizing it as a degrading comparison not worthy of serious notice. Mr. Campbell conceded the primacy or superiority of Peter on one or more of four possible counts, viz; age, talents, character, office. How did Bishop Purcell know it was *official* superiority, when it is far more likely to have been Peter's age, experience, and personality that fitted him for moral leadership in the function of giving instruction to Christ's disciples, weak and strong, young and old? The truth is, Christ never conferred official authority on anybody for any purpose. He selected men according to their qualities and opportunities to discharge certain moral and spiritual functions necessary to the on going of his kingdom, nothing more and nothing different.

If Christ had been in the diplomatic and political business of conferring and distributing offices he had already conferred on Peter the highest office that the kingdom had to offer. When and where did Peter evacuate this office of Apostle, prophet, teacher, missionary, to become the official and universal head of a church, not then in existence; or did he hold down both jobs at the same time? If Peter was an Apostle, as the certainly was, he could not become the bishop of a church, "A king, a justice of the peace, the Bishop of London and the vicar of Bray."

The most crucial contest over the grammatical structure of a sentence, the most decisive exegetical battle of the great war, was over Matt. 16:17, 18. "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my church," and "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

Peter, on the strength of these passages, our Romanist friends tell us, was the foundation of the church, and, there-

fore, the first pope, the wielder of the keys and the dispenser of salvation and damnation for all time. Hence, the declaration of Boniface III, the first Pope:

> Moreover we declare and say and define and pronounce to every human creature, that it is altogether necessary to salvation to be subject to the Roman Pontiff.

This horrific piece of blasphemous ignorance and arrogance finds its chief support on a gross perversion of the first part of this Petrine passage, and a transparent misinterpretation of the second part. "Thou art Peter (*petros*) and upon this rock (*petra*) I will build my church," or, literally, thou art a *stone* and upon this *rock* I will build my church. His lordship, the Bishop, quotes his Roman Catholic Bible the *Latin Vulgate,* which converts the feminine *petra* (rock) into a masculine noun to correspond to the masculine *petros,* and then the Syriac comes in to show that *petra* has no gender! This is the grammar of religion, according to Rome, that puts Pope Peter I solid on the rock foundation of the church, Mr. Campbell's analysis puts the matter in a clear and convincing light.

> But *petros* and *petra* sound alike and, therefore, though of different gender, case and person they must be identical! Of the person and case we have said enough (for my friend has not attempted to refute it). Of the difference in gender, he will tell us that it was written in Syriac and that the word, signifying stone, has no gender. This is gratuitous. He can produce no copy of Matthew in Syriac; the only authentic copy we have is that before me. It is the Greek version of Matthew: "Thou" is in the second person and "this" is in the third. *Petros* is masculine and *petra* is feminine. It is impossible for language to do more to prevent mistake; and he that would attempt to explain away these three, gender, person, and case, is not subject to the laws of language, neither *indeed* can be.

Just before this Mr. Campbell had said:

> We Protestants say that the church is founded on the thing confessed. Christ himself is indeed the rock; but, figuratively, the truth which represents him is the rock. I was struck with astonishment when I heard my worthy opponent say, that Peter was the rock and Christ only a stone in this spiritual temple!

At this point Bishop Purcell arose and explained: that he had said that Christ was "the corner stone which was to strengthen and give consistency to the foundation;" and Peter "the rock which was to strengthen and give consistency to the superstructure."

Mr. Campbell proceeded: "Christ the corner *stone!* and Peter the rock! Does this help the matter?" He then took up First Corinthians 3, and, as with a besom of destruction, swept the ground clear of papal stones and rocks, and rubbish heaps, and junk of all kinds; "Other foundation can no man lay than which is laid"—which is—Peter! No indeed, but "which is Jesus Christ." Then Peter is but a *stone* as his name imports. But there were eleven other stones of equal value; for says the Holy Spirit, the church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles—all of the Apostles; and of the prophets, too. When all these stones are at the foundation, and Christ the chief corner, where is the room for Peter the rock?" And we might add to this, if addition were needed, that Peter was the doorkeeper, the key-wielder of that rock-structured temple and could not, therefore, at the same time, be its foundation.

But what about the "keys" problem, the power to open and shut, to remit and retain sins? By the express and unmistakable direction of Jesus, Peter possessed the keys. Supreme ecclesiastic and universal headship was conferred on him—exclusive authority to open and shut the doors of the kingdom, a power which has been exercised by all the popes from Peter to the present incumbent of the Holy see. This is the Romish interpretation of the key episode in the conversation at Ceasarea Philippi. The celebrated A. B. Bruce of Scotland, the most eminent synoptic specialist of his time, delivered many lectures and wrote many books on synoptic problems. I heard him say, in a course of lectures at the summer school of Theology in Oxford in 1892, if there was any reason for believing that these passages could be made to bear the construction put upon them by the Roman Catholic church, he would not hesi-

tate for a moment to advocate their swift excision from the New Testament, as never having been uttered by Jesus Christ. He declared, with passionate emphasis, that this juggling, priestly conception and explanation could never have emanated from the prophetic mind of Jesus the Master. He was not built that way.

Happily, however, there was no necessity for being afraid that the text could be tortured into even a squint in the direction of the priestly misconstruction. Mr. Campbell has shown this beyond the shadow of a doubt. Peter being appointed, on account of his fitness, in a time of crisis, was the first to exercise the privilege of proclaiming the conditions of entrance into the new reign of God about to be ushered in. As a matter of fact, and in harmony with the testimony of inspired history, Peter did use the keys in the admission of 5,000 into the kingdom on the first Pentecost after our Lord's resurrection. Did anybody ever hear of a Pope doing anything like this? Subsequently Peter used the same keys in the admission of the Gentiles at the household of Cornelius. They gave him no authority, in any official sense, not possessed by all the Apostles, and all other Christians on the face of the earth.

As to John 20:22, "Whose soever sins ye remit," etc., being a sufficient prop of authority for priestly absolution. These words *are its complete condemnation*: for they were spoken to a general community of men and women belonging to the Christian brotherhood, and they *commission the entire body of believers* to "remit" human sins; that is to say, to announce *the terms* upon which the evangel operates in human life. Christianity, if there is a word of truth in the New Testament, is not a hierarchy; it is a brotherhood, and one of its central truths is the common priesthood of all believers. Beyond this common priesthood there is no other. There is no necessity for any other.

But Mr. Campbell is out gunning for popes—big game, so to speak—and finding no trace of one in the Apostle to the circumcision, he begins a famous journey down the historic line,

and looking keenly and carefully about him on the way, he finds no trace nor trail nor scent of a full grown specimen, till he reaches the year of our Lord 586. Here the scent warms up and the tracks are plain, but the real prey is not yet in sight. This was in the time of Gregory the Great of Rome and of John the faster of Constantinople. Already the papal bee had begun to buzz and sting in the bonnet of this patriarch faster, John of the Greek church, who assumed the title of the universal father and supreme head of the church, in a council, held in this same year, 586.

In this eventful year, it appears, that the papal bee had become badly tangled in the hair of his holiness, the patriarch of Rome and trouble was brewing. Gregory, the renowned Roman saint of the period, protested, with vituperative bitterness, against the elevation of John to the supreme and universal headship of the church. He characterized the attempt to elevate him as "proud, blasphemous, anti-Christian and diabolical," and said that the Bishops of Rome refused to take this title upon them, "lest they should seem to encroach upon the rights of other bishops." Something dropped at this time and events moved rapidly to consummation. Mauritius, the then reigning emperor of the east, died at the hands of Phocas, a villianous centurion of his own army. Mauritius, as might have been expected, favored the pretensions of the Bishop of Constantinople and turned a deaf ear to the importunities of Gregory on the subject of taking from Bishop John the title of universal father, so painful to the pride and humility of the great Gregory. For, as we have just noted, the *saint* had written to the emperor on the arrogance of John, metropolitan of the great diocese of the east. Mauritius was supplanted and the throne usurped by Phocas, the villain, who not only put him to sleep, but caused the murder of his wife and seven children, that no rival might appear to thwart his plans. Gregory the Great rejoiced at the death of the emperor, and hailed the elevation of his murderer to the throne. Gregory consecrated him in the church of St. John the Baptist at Constanti-

nople, and Phocas, as a reward for his consecration and favorable regards, conferred upon the successor of Gregory, Boniface the third, the title of *Universal Patriarch* in the very sense in which it had been repudiated by Gregory. Thus in the year of 606 A.D., two years after the death of the saint, the first pope was placed in the chair of St. Peter, if indeed Peter had ever sat in a chair in Rome, by one of the blackest hearted animals that ever reigned over that unholy pagan mess, known in history, as the Roman Empire.

Gibbon the historian in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," thus speaks of the consecration of the beautiful Phocas, first of the emperors of Rome to turn pope maker.

As soon as the patriarch (St. Gregory) was assured of his orthodox belief, he consecrated the successful usurper in the church of St. John the Baptist. On the third day, amidst the acclamations of a thoughtless people, Phocas made his public entry in a chariot, drawn by four white horses; the revolt of the troops was rewarded by a lavish donation, and the new sovereign, after visiting the palace, beheld from his throne the games of the hippodrome.

Mr. Campbell remarked, at this point, "but the infidel has good reason to laugh at the saint, where he records the exultation of Gregory at the death of Mauritius," and continued his reading from Gibbon.

As a subject and a Christian it was the duty of Gregory to acquiesce in the established government; but the joyful applause, with which he salutes the fortunes of the assassin, has sullied, with indelible disgrace, the character of the saint. The successor of the Apostles might have inculcated, with decent firmness, the guilt of blood and the necessity of repentance; he is content to celebrate the deliverance of the people and the fall of the oppressor; to rejoice that the piety and benignity of Phocas have raised him by providence to the Imperial Throne; to pray that his hands may be strengthened against all his enemies, and to express a wish, perhaps, a prophecy, that after long and triumphant reign, he may be transferred from a temporal to an everlasting kingdom.

Pagan politics and superstition and dense moral corruption, the abomination of desolation in the holy place, masquerading

in the name of Him who said, "My kingdom is not of this world." How does it look?"

The Bishop, in rebuttal of the testimony of the historian, declared that Gibbon, when a lad of 16 read a book of the holy mother church which convinced him of the truth of the Catholic religion. His bigoted, Protestant father took the book from him, exiled him to France, where in a virtual state of incarceration, he lived on bread and water, where all literary pap from Rome was cut off. Gibbon became an infidel and a hater of religion. "Alas" the Bishop piously remarked, "sad proof of the restraints on liberty of conscience, as exemplified in Protestant communities." Say, isn't that the pot calling the kettle?

## CHAPTER XV

## THE CAMPBELL-PURCELL DEBATE: MOOTED QUESTIONS OF HISTORY

*Rome Camouflages and Denies to Hide Historic Deformities. Putting on the Livery of Heaven to Serve the Devil. Disputed Points of History Invariably Turn Out in Mr. Campbell's Favor.*

## PROPOSITION III.

She is not uniform in her faith, or united in her members; but mutable and fallible, as any other sect of philosophy or religion—Jewish, Turkish or Christian—a confederation of sects with a politico-ecclesiastic head.

*Mr. Campbell affirms.*
*Bishop Purcell denies.*

## CHAPTER XV

### THE CAMPBELL-PURCELL DEBATE: MOOTED QUESTIONS OF HISTORY

WHILE on the subject of popes and the papacy, Bishop Purcell admitted fifty bad popes out of two hundred. That is to say, twenty-five per cent, or one in four of the holy fathers who had occupied the chair of St. Peter, down to this debate in 1837 were bad men. From the point of view of the lowest standards of human decency, they were wicked reprobates and common sinners. In extenuation of this somewhat embarrassing situation, if not in justification of the fact, the bishop reminded his opponent that there was one hypocrite and traitor among the twelve apostles. Mr. Campbell's reply to this attempted palliation of papal badness, occupies a page of brevier type, the substance of which may be expressed in a sentence or two. Judas repented of his crime, and was so stung and tortured by remorse and grief that he had the decency to go out and hang himself! How many of these unholy monstrosities, official representatives of God and vicars of Jesus Christ, whose betrayal of the Lord was infinitely worse, and infinitely less excusable than that of poor Judas—how many of these had the conscience, the courage, and the manhood to go and do likewise! There is no historic parallel of infamy, perfidy and brazen criminality to these so-called holy fathers, who were put up by a so-called holy church, and the so-called holy Roman Empire, to rule over the body of Christ on earth. If like people like priest, what kind of a church was it that did the putting up?

The most exciting episode of the debate occurred on the last day, but one. There was a great explosion of accumulated emotion on the Catholic side and it was as morally significant and characteristic as it was emotional. The keenest and

most literary of the reporters and reviewers present, and he was an outsider, made this remark, in his reflections on the discussion:

> Towards the conclusion of the debate, the Bishop increased in excitement, so much so, that, on one occasion, during the afternoon of the day previous to its termination, when he supposed Mr. Campbell had quoted inaccurately from a Roman Catholic author, it appeared almost unnatural.

Dr. Richardson, in his Memoirs of Alexander Campbell, gives us a good description and abbreviation of the story, which makes it convenient for me to draw most of my narrative material from him.

The quotation, referred to, as the occasion of Bishop Purcell's singular excitement, was from the "Moral Theology" of Alphonsus de Ligori, of which a synopsis, in English, had been given by a Mr. Smith of New York, a convert from Romanism. The passage reads thus:

> A Bishop, however poor he may be, cannot appropriate, to himself, pecuniary fines without the license of the Apostolic See. But he ought to apply them to pious uses. Much less can he apply those fines to anything else than religious uses, which the Council of Trent has laid upon the nonresident clergymen, or upon those *clergymen who keep concubines.*

Mr. Campbell had introduced this passage to show, that amongst the Roman clergy, marriage was a greater sin than concubinage, because marriage produced instant excommunication while concubinage was *fined* and *winked at.* Bishop Purcell declared that no such doctrine was ever taught by Catholics, and that no such passage was ever written by St. Ligori.

> "I have examined these volumes," pointing to the nine volumes of Ligori on the stand, "from cover to cover, and, in none of them, can so much as a shadow be found for the infamous charges. I have pledged myself to show to every man of honor, in the city, that the last allegation, read by the gentleman, purporting to be from the works of Ligori, is not to be found in the works of that author."

The Bishop then called on Prof. Biggs to examine the nine volumes of Ligori to see, if he could find the passage referred to by Mr. Smith. But the Professor, finding that the paging did not accord with that of the edition used by Mr. Smith, declined further examination. The Bishop then referred the case to Mr. Kinmont, a classic teacher in the city, who, after having had a day to examine, was brought upon the stage by the Bishop and testified that he had not been able to find the passage. Great excitement was naturally produced by the directness of the issue, thus formed, and the vast importance, which the bishop seemed to attach to it. Mr. Campbell, not being able to find the passage from the reference in Mr. Smith's synopsis, promised to investigate the matter and F. W. Emmons, who was present, having at his request dispatched a note to Mr. Smith, received from him at once a reply, stating that the passage in question was on page 444 of the eighth volume. Upon receiving this communication Mr. Campbell asked, from Bishop Purcell, the loan of St. Ligori's works, and, on turning to page 444, volume eight, *found every word in the Bishop's own edition* just as had been quoted. He then took the original Latin and the synopsis of Mr. Smith to Mr. Kinmont, who then certified that Mr. Smith's, as quoted, was a faithful translation of the passage.

The Bishop's emphatic denial of the existence of such a doctrine, in the *Moral Theology,* at the time, had considerable effect in creating doubt upon the subject, but the result of the investigation greatly injured the cause he defended and justly served to throw discredit upon his frequent denials and denunciations in regard to other authorties and evidences, which Mr. Campbell adduced in support of his propositions. The people could hardly impute, to ignorance of the *Moral Theology* of his own church, or of the writings of St. Ligori, his positive avowments that no such doctrine as the one in question was held by Roman Catholics and, consequently, were led to attribute his bold denials to motives to which the application of the epithet *moral* was as inappropriate as it was to

his *Theology* itself, but certainly quite as much *needed* for the information of the credulous.

This reminds us of another passage, at arms, over a bit of documentary evidence, almost as sensational, and quite as damaging to the *Moral Theology* of Rome, which occurred on the first and second days of the debate. Part of this has been used before for another purpose. It was the clash over the veracity and historicity of Du Pin, one of the best known and most highly esteemed of Roman Catholic scholars and historians. According to his testimony, based on the indisputable facts of history, in the year 325 A.D., when the council of Nice assembled, the first of the great ecclesiastical councils, there were four reigning bishops, whose jurisdictions corresponded to the four political divisions of the Roman empire; Rome, Constantinople, Antioch and Alexandria. In process of time Jerusalem was added, and these all became radiating centers of ecclesiastical power and patronage. As. Mr. Campbell remarked, in a restatement of the witness of Du Pin,

> The bishops, of each diocese, assumed a sort of primacy, in his own district; and, as various interferences and rivalries in jurisdiction occurred, the Council of Nice so far decided that the same power should be given to them all—that all primates should be coordinate. Hence Du Pin could not find, in that council, authority for the supreme primacy of Rome.

Purcell answered this by denying the authority of Du Pin and asserting the supremacy of the Roman bishop. Mr. Campbell proceeded to show, by unquestioned Catholic authorities, that Du Pin was a recognized scholar and historian of the church, but, inasmuch as his opponent had rejected and denounced Du Pin he would not be further used, as he had not been already, except where he was explicitly and unmistakably backed up and abundantly corroborated by the acknowledged authorities of the church, the Bishop of Cincinnati being the judge. The only possible explanation of this mental attitude of his, is the fact that he was more concerned for the salvation of a theory of ecclesiastical history, for obvious reasons, than he was for the salvation of the truth; and

this, while bad enough for theology, is much worse for the ethical or moral side of the proposition, when a man deliberately and willfully shuts his eyes to facts because they stand in the way of his theories he is dishonest, and dishonesty is the worst kind of immorality.

But this is not the particular point in the present count against Rome's theological morality. This man Du Pin wrote a book on the life of St. Gregory, who held the pre-eminence for the most unadulterated saintship in the Roman calendar, for five hundred years. He was not only "St. Gregory" but "St. Gregory the Great," under whose influence and manipulation his successor became the first pope of Rome. We caught a slight glance, in the last chapter, on the joint authority of Du Pin and Gibbon of the color and tinge of the moral concepts that trickled through the brain grooves of St. Gregory, when he took the leading part in the consecration of the assassin, Phocas, to the throne of the Holy Roman Empire. It is Du Pin who tells us that the great saint not only opposed the title of pope or universal patriarch, in the case of John the Faster, as proud, heretical, blasphemous and diabolical, but declared, with violent and frantic emphasis, that no other bishop should assume this pompous and arrogant title. But, when a new dynasty ascended the throne and offered the title to a Roman bishop, although the purchase of treachery and blood it had lost its blasphemy and impiety, and we find the successor of St. Gregory wearing the title of universal patriarch or pope without a scruple or sign of consciousness that a degenerate religion had dropped to the lowest moral levels of paganism. And here we reach the milk in the cocoanut and are able to understand why Bishop Purcell waved Du Pin and Gibbon aside by rejecting the authority of the one and calling the other an infidel. Not so much because the truth of history had landed a knock out blow square on the solar plexus of papal pretensions for the first six centuries of the church's existence, but *because the moral color of the transaction was perilously shady.*

When Gregory, the Saint, had his fill of rejoicing over the assassination of the Greek Emperor, whom the saint disliked, because he refused to pinch off the head of John the Faster, who had assumed universal headship of the church with the seat of the empire in Constantinople; he proceeded to the consecration of the murderer and usurper Phocas to the throne of the empire, preceded with a slight *theological examination,* like that used in the ordination of a priest. When the saint, we are told, was satisfied that the candidate, for imperial honors, held *orthodox views on the doctrines of the church,* he consecrated him Sovereign of the Empire of holy Rome. Be it said, to the shame of ecclesiastical historians, that it remained for an infidel to have enough intellect and moral sensibility to sense and say the heinousness and moral turpitude of the whole unsavory business. He remarked, in a tone of disgust and repulsion, that the affair had sullied with *indelible disgrace* the character of the saint; and the character of the church represented by the saint fared even worse; for it was out of gratitude for this consecration (may the Lord have mercy on the word) of a villian to the throne of empire, with the church behind it, that inspired said villain to elevate Gregory's successor to spiritual empire, the universal headship of the church. Then little time was lost; no grass grew under their feet in proceeding to Constantinople, where with less ceremony they took off the ecclesiastical head of poor John the Faster, relegated him to the shades of a disgraced oblivion and the new pontiff at Rome, made by an immoral and godless emperor, as the first of the popes, like Alexander Selkirk,

> He was monarch of all he surveyed;
> There were none his rights to dispute;
> From the center all round to the sea,
> He was lord of the fowl and the brute.

Now, contrast if you please, the vaulting ambition, the odious and strutting arrogance, the silly vanity, and brutal tyranny of these moral degenerates, who ruled over church

and state, with the simple democracy and loving fraternity, the sympathetic and unselfish brotherliness, the union of all who love, in the service of all who suffer, expressed by the words of our Lord in Matt. 20:25-28:

> Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you; but whosoever would be great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.

How does that accord with the political autocracy and moral decadence of historic Rome?

Mr. Campbell's first speech, on the fourth proposition, was an intellectual phenomenon, a marvel of knowledge, erudition and interpretative power. It electrified the audience and paralyzed the Bishop. Dr. Richardson says of it:

> His next speech of an hour, on the fourth proposition, was so grand and overwhelming that it made a most profound impression, not only upon the audience but apparently upon Bishop Purcell himself, who, it was observed, seemed quite unable to recover from the force of Mr. Campbell's graphic delineation of Romanism and its identification with "the Babylon" of John, "the Man of Sin" of Paul, and "the little horn" of Daniel's vision.

This gripping and masterly interpretation of the apocalyptic visions of the Old and New Testaments, and their literal verification and materialization, in a corrupt and persecuting papacy, the lineal and logical successor of the pagan Rome of the Caesars, has settled the question of these prophecies once for all. Modern critics and scholars, influenced by political considerations and moral changes, which the progress of civilization has forced upon "the mother church," are disposed to let her down in a soft place, by alleging the fulfillment of these prophetic symbols in the beastology of pagan Rome. I wonder if it ever occurs to these gentlemen that these two institutions are really one and the same; that papal

Rome is pagan Rome, continued up to the time when the pope had his teeth drawn in the loss of his temporal power? I seriously recommend to them the careful perusal and study of this great speech, made by Alexander Campbell in the City of Cincinnati 83 years ago and the feeble reply made to it by his learned opponent. If they do, they will learn a thing or two, or perhaps relearn a few, that, owing to politics and the modern rush of things, had faded out of their minds.

## CHAPTER XVI

## THE CAMPBELL-PURCELL DEBATE: REAL APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

*The Line of Cleavage between the Apostolic Church and the Roman-Greek Apostasy. The Real Apostolic Succession, and the Prophetic Line from Christ and the Apostles. Effects of the Discussion and a Final Review from the Outside.*

## PROPOSITIONS IV, V, VI, VII.

4. She is the "Babylon" of John the "Man of sin" of Paul, and the Empire of the "Youngest Horn" of Daniel's Sea Monster.

5. Her notions of purgatory, indulgences, auricular confession, remission of sins, transsubstantiation, supererogation, etc., essential elements of her system, are immoral in their tendency, and injurious to the well-being of society, religious and political.

6. Notwithstanding her pretensions to have given us the Bible, and faith in it, we are perfectly independent of her for our knowledge of that book, and its evidences of a divine original.

7. The Roman Catholic religion, if infallible and unsusceptible of reformation, as alleged, is essentially anti-American, being opposed to the genius of all free institutions, and positively subversive of them, opposing the general reading of the scriptures, and the diffusion of useful knowledge among the whole community, so essential to liberty and the permanency of good government.

*Mr. Campbell affirms.*
*Bishop Purcell denies.*

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE CAMPBELL-PURCELL DEBATE: REAL APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION

THE horizontal and perpendicular progress of the gospel in the Roman Empire—that is to say, its intellectual and social progress *up* and its numerical extension *out,*—paved the way for planting the seeds of demoralization, dissention, and ultimate moral corruption. The facts of history, brought forward by Mr. Campbell in this debate, make it absolutely certain, that the church captured the world in the first two centuries, and in the next two, or less, the world made a counter drive, and captured the church. In the conversion of Constantine, in the middle of the fourth century, and the consummation of this unholy union, by this unholy conversion, the church lost its identity and the world didn't. The cloven foot of the man of sin, the son of perdition, mystery Babylon of John, under the grotesque imagery of apocalyptic beasthood, began to make tracks, distinctly visible, on the sands of time, before the end of the first century. A pagan environment and the old priestly conception of religion the Jews had borrowed from Semite heathenism, had commenced to get in their deadly work before John and Paul ceased to write.

With the strongest forces of apostolic and prophetic leadership withdrawn, it was only a question of time when "the abomination of desolation," "the world, the flesh and the devil," would rush in to occupy, and "make desolate," the holy place to selfish and worldly ends. The historic culmination of this unholy process was reached in or near the middle of the third century, about the year 250 of the Christian era. Mr. Campbell at this point, with reference to this period

brings forward a great array of the undisputed facts of history to visualize the first fissure in the rock, the first gaping seam that separates the apostacy from the original apostolic church of the New Testament.

The Martin Luther of that third century Protestant reformation was Novatus, who differed from our Luther of the 16th century, in the fact that he represented a real Church of Christ, already existent, which had come down to this day from the Apostles. The controversy between Cornelius and Novatus, about the Bishopric of Rome, embraced the points at issue, which separated the true church from that which was then grievously contaminated with error and immorality.

It was indeed, as Mr. Campbell remarks, a controversy about the purity of communion and discipline, rather than about articles of doctrine. In modern phrase it was an ethical, much more than a theological reformation, that those early representatives of the holy catholic church of the New Testament were trying to bring about in the middle of the third century. Eusebius, the oldest of ecclesiastical historians, informed us that Novatus and his party were called *Cathari* or *Puritans*. These were the remnant in the church who had not bowed the knee to Baal, who understood the mind of Jesus Christ to mean the inspiration, and regulation of conduct, with a view to the formation of character, the rendition of service, and the determination of destiny. The only charge that Eusebius and Purcell could bring against them was their "Uncharitableness" in refusing to commune with those of immoral and doubtful character.

Waddington, one of the best and most accurate of modern church historians, is quoted as thus testifying of the Novatians, and the effort they made to prevent the disruption of the church by part of it hardening into hopeless banality and moral corruption:

> Novatian, a presbyter of Rome, was a man of great talents and learning, and of character so austere, that he was unwilling, under any circumstances of contrition, to readmit those who had been

once separated from the communion of the church. And this severity he would have extended, not only to those who had fallen by deliberate transgression, but even to such as had made a forced compromise of their faith under the terrors of persecution. He considered the Christian church as a society, wherein virtue and innocence reigned universally, and refused any longer to acknowledge, as members of it, those who had once degenerated into unrighteousness.

This endeavor to revive the spotless moral purity of the primitive faith was found inconsistent with the corruptions, even of that early age; it was regarded with suspicion by the leading prelates as a vain and visionary scheme; and those rigid principles, which had characterized and sanctified the church in the first century, were abandoned to the profession of schismatic sectaries in the third.

The modern Bishop joined the ancient prelates in a bitter denunciation of Novatus, and the real apostolic church represented by him, for their heartless uncharity and cruelty in the attitude they took up towards apostates professing penitence, who had dashed the martyr's crown, in face of danger, for a few more years of physical life, under the camouflage of heathen regularity. In that heroic and martyr age of the Christian religion, the greatest virtue and the highest honor was to face death for Christ's sake, at the cost of a swift and certain martyrdom.

The unpardonable sin, on the other hand, the blackest and most ineffaceable dishonor, was to deny Christ and his cross to escape the terrors of persecution. People who recanted, who struck their colors and made a cowardly compromise with the enemy of truth and life, were identified, by the Holy Spirit, as the bunch who had "crucified to themselves the son of God afresh and put him to an open shame;" those who had sinned wilfully, after they had received a knowledge of the truth, for whom there was no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire which shall devour the adversaries."

One cannot help wondering if any of these hierarchs, prelates, and potentates of the apostasy, ancient or modern, ever heard these words from Hebrews, written by Paul or one of his contemporary disciples? After all their ravings against

Novatus and his brethren, for their "austerity," "severity" and "uncharitableness" and "Puritanism" it turns out, upon the best of apostolic authority and New Testament practice, that the only fault the enemy could find with these early Puritans was the most conspicuous of their loyalties to the ideals of Jesus Christ, identifying them, beyond a doubt, with the apostolic *regime* and the church as it was at the first.

These Puritans or reformers, the historic successors to the original apostolic church (historians inform us) spread all over the world, and continued to oppose the pretensions of the apostatic majority, who claimed to be the only true Catholic Church. They continued, under the name of Novatians, for more than *two centuries;* but finally were merged into the Donatists, who are the same people under another name. These Donatists were a very large and prosperous community. We read of 278 Donatist bishops in one African council. Of these people the historian just cited deposes:

> The Donatists have never been charged with the slightest show of truth, with any error of doctrine, or any defect in church Government or discipline, or any depravity of moral practice; they agreed, in every respect, with their adversaries except one, they did not acknowledge, as legitimate, the ministry of the African Church, but considered their own body to be the true, uncorrupted, universal church.

They were right, too, if the New Testament is to be believed. We here get a firm grip upon the line of the true apostolic succession, the prophetic line of Simon pure spiritual and moral quality to which Christ and the Apostles belonged.

These Donatists went on for *two centuries* with their work. when they were amalgamated with the Paulicians. They, too, were called Puritans, the name always given by Rome and the world to those who believe that the church ought to keep the moral law of the ten commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. The church historian, Jones, joins Waddington, Du Pin and Gibbon in testifying that the aim and purpose of the Paulicians, like their predecessors, was "to restore, as far

as possible, the profession of Christianity to all its primitive simplicity." Gibbon says:

> The Paulician Teachers were distinguished only by their scriptural names, by the modest title of their fellow pilgrims; by the austerity of their lives, their zeal and knowledge, and the credit of some extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit. But they were incapable of desiring, or at least, of obtaining the wealth and honors of the Catholic prelacy, such anti-christian pride, they strongly censured.

Until the appearance of the Waldenses and Albigenses, we are told upon incontestable grounds of sound historic testimony, these Protestants continued to oppose the church of nations in the East, and in the West, until, at one time, they claimed the title of Catholic. We read of hundreds of bishops attending the different councils, in which they met to oppose the violent assaults of their enemies. It is sometimes difficult to say which were the more numerous party, we are told, those in communion with the Cathari, or Puritans, sometimes called Novatians, sometimes Donatists, sometimes Paulicians, sometimes Waldenses, but always, in fact, Protestant and valiant contenders for "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." After all then, the gates of hell did not prevail against the church even in the darkest of the dark ages of Roman domination.

In this connection, and upon the basis of these unimpeachable testimonies, Mr. Campbell brings in a telling summary against the institution defended by his opponent.

"The spirit of true religion seems to have fled from Rome from the first appearance of the Novatians. The first schism at Rome, acknowledged and recorded by the Roman Catholic historians, is that which occurred at the election of Cornelius over Novatus. Hence Novatus is called the first antipope. Du Pin and Barronius, both Catholic witnesses, amply testify of the violence by which St. Peter's chair was often filled with a vicar after this schism. In the election of Damasas many were killed in the churches of Rome. One hun-

dred and thirty-four persons, beaten to death with clubs, were carried out of a single house at this election.

Had the Holy Spirit anything to do in thus filling the chair of St. Peter with a vicar of Christ? Is the church, which permits such things, and which has been sustained by such means, the true church of God? Is the person, thus elected, the supreme head of Christ's Church—the proper vicar of Christ? May we not then say that the spirit of God, on that day, had departed from Rome? And may we not add, from the documents before us, that if there be any truth in history, we have found a succession of witnesses for the ancient faith against Rome, from the days of the first schism till the present hour?"

It only remains to be added that Purcell made no headway in his feeble efforts to rebut these monumental facts. Indeed, he seldom made any effort at all to answer them, for the good and sufficient reason that they were unanswerable. But, for the lack of time and space, I must pause at this point. No attempt has been made to follow up *seriatim,* or in regular succession, the discussion of the seven propositions laid down by Mr. Campbell at the beginning.

My aim has been to touch the vital and determinative points of the argument and to use the concrete material that lent itself, the most readily, to narration and illustration, suitable to the reading public of our time. No attempt has been made to reproduce the discussion of abstractions, dogmatic, theological propositions, and mystery concealments, Rome's favorite method of sanctifying her superstitions, for the simple reason that for all practical purposes, such reproduction would have been a waste of space, and an unrighteous appeal to the reader's patience.

The effects and consequences of this debate, in which Mr. Campbell had vanquished his strongest opponent, with quite as much ease as the lesser lights of his former conflicts, were less startling than suggestive. The political press of the city,

which feared Irish influence and the Catholic vote, as much then as it does now, was enlisted by Rome to manufacture public opinion against Mr. Campbell. The sectarian denominational organs of Protestant name and affiliation especially the Baptist, which disliked Mr. Campbell because it feared the success of his religious movement by the advancement of his personal reputation, which victory in this debate would necessarily bring.

It was the same fraternity which had prayer for the triumph of the infidel, Robert Owen, over "heretic" Campbell, eight years before in the same city, who are now equally fervent in their supplications for the victory of Rome over the mightiest and cleanest of Protestant champions, because of sectarian jealousies, which they had not the decency and strength of character to hide. These misrepresentations of public opinion so incensed the enlightened and fair-minded citizens, who had heard the debate, that a great mass meeting was called, at the close of the discussion, and these emphatic resolutions were passed without a dissenting voice:

1. *Resolved,* That it is the unanimous opinion of this meeting that the cause of Protestantism has been fully sustained throughout this discussion.

2. *Resolved,* That it is our opinion the arguments in favor of Protestantism, and the objections to the terrors of popery have not yet been met.

3. *Resolved,* That we look forward to the publication of this discussion as a powerful antedote to the sophistry and arrogance of all the advocates of Romanism: and that we have the fullest confidence in submitting it to the impartial decision of the American people.

4. *Resolved,* That we approve of the spirit and temper and were pleased with the power of argument and the authorities by which Mr. Campbell sustained his positions, and concur with him in possessing no unkind feeling or prejudices toward individuals, but believe the principles of Romanism inconsistent with our free institutions.

The most discriminating and penetrating literary discussion of the date, comes to us from the editor of *The Philanthropist,* a brilliant lawyer and a gentleman of high standing and un-

blemished character. There is only room for a couple of extracts:

Ill as we thought of Romanism before on many grounds, but chiefly because it demands of its *rank and file* to surrender to the "Officers and Staff," the most precious right that God has bestowed on them—*the right of judging for themselves on their most important concerns for this life and for that which is to come*—and because its management is mysteriously and sedulously concealed from the inspection of the community, our opinion of it is now tenfold more unfavorable. If Bishop Purcell has made for it the best defense of which it is susceptible or one that's even *respectable,* it is a deeply contrived system of absurdities in theory, and abominations in practice, and calls at once for examination, that it may meet with the abhorrence of every republican and Christian who has any proper regard for personal liberty or intellectual independence.

A word for Mr. Campbell and his manner of conducting the debate:

So far as Mr. Campbell was concerned we can speak with unalloyed pleasure. His facts were judiciously selected; his historical landmarks well chosen, presenting, without the confusion that too often occurs from introducing too many things, his case with great plainness and simplicity. Every point on which we heard him fully, we thought he fully sustained. And then it was all done with such unaffected calmness, such dispassionateness and an ardent desire to arrive at the truth for the truth's sake; with such Christian forbearance in the midst of provoking assaults from his adversary (although he had multiplied opportunities for impaling him) and the most ungenerous treatment, received daily from a part of the political press of this city, that, had we ever before entertained any prejudices against Mr. Campbell, he would, by his conduct, amidst so many and such long continued trials, have well nigh dissipated them.

## CHAPTER XVII

## THE CAMPBELL-RICE DEBATE

*Last but not Least of the Big Five. Place: Lexington, Kentucky. Time: November* 15 *to December* 1, 1843. *Concerning Environment and Atmosphere.*

I rejoice in the present discussion, because it strikes at the main roots of modern partyism—the creeds, the baptisms, and the spirits of moral philosophy and human expediency. Before a holier and a happier era, we must resume the original basis of one Lord, one Creed, one Baptism, one Spirit. United on these we stand: divided we fall. These opinions, creeds, baptisms and spirits must be repudiated. Hence the necessity of discussion.

—*Alexander Campbell.*

Mr. President—With regard to the reformation of the sixteenth century and its glorious results, I perfectly agree with my friend, whose address you have just heard. And I am truly happy to appear before this large audience today in the defence of the great doctrines and truths elicited by the investigation of those eminent men, who were the honored instruments of rescuing the Scriptures from ecclesiastical despotism, and proclaiming to the world the fundamental truth, that the Bible teaches all that is necessary to be believed, or to be done, to secure eternal life.

—*N. L. Rice.*

# CHAPTER XVII

## THE CAMPBELL-RICE DEBATE

I HAVE heard of an old preacher who began all his sermons by saying: "The Gospel, my brethern, has its chronology and its geography; its beginning time and its beginning place." Passing, as of comparatively little importance, the originating circumstances, the arrangement of preliminaries, and the long drawn out correspondence, which preceded this, the greatest of the world's religious debates, a few lines may be devoted, with profit, I think, to the question of *time* and *place,* as these questions relate themselves to the atmosphere and environment, that made the discussion of this character and magnitude, either desirable or possible. There was first, an environing intellectual, cultural, and social atmosphere that gave to the geographical and chronological conditions the interest of a unique situation.

The far-famed blue grass region of central Kentucky, consisting of enough territory to make five or six counties of ordinary size, with Lexington as the capital, and most renowned educational center, Athens and Jerusalem rolled into one, as I have before remarked, has produced more grey matter, more cerebral substance to the square inch, more thinkers, scholars, teachers, statesmen, orators, and great preachers, lawyers and doctors, than any other spot of earth, of its size, in the United States, or out of it, as far as my knowledge extends. At the time of this debate it was as easy to find an intellectual man or a beautiful woman on the streets of Lexington, in outlying blue grass towns, as it was reputed to be, to find a god in Athens at the time of Paul's visit, when he debated with Greek philosophers on the Areopagus at Mar's Hill.

As far back as Alexander Campbell's first visit to this city in the year 1823, immediately after his debate with McCalla, in Mason County, a single congregation on a single occasion provided brain stimuli in such abundance as to create a positive reaction in his mind to a degree of inspiration, under the spell, of which he astonished the natives, in a sermon of unwonted greatness and power. There was a young man listening to that sermon, who declared, forty years later, that he had never heard anything to approach it either before or since; this youth became the celebrated Dr. Bell, of Louisville, renowned for his scientific skill in his chosen profession, and his encyclopedic knowledge in many branches of learning. He declared that his mother was the finest Bible student and teacher he had ever known, showing that in the original distribution of brains, all of the grey matter did not fall to the male of the species. These two were parishioners of Dr. Fishback, distinguished for his scholarship, his culture, his pulpit and platform eloquence, his sweetness and light in private life; who, after hearing this great sermon of Mr. Campbell's, preached from his own pulpit, became his devoted friend for the rest of his life.

The Rev. Jeremiah Vardeman, a man of ability, attractive personality, and great popularity, Mr. Campbell's guide in his maiden visit to the blue grass capitol, introduced him next to Transylvania University and its distinguished president, Dr. Horace Holley, a man of fine manners, broad culture, liberal principles, and great oratorical powers, in a community passionately devoted to oratory, with such spell-binding contemporaries as Clay, Crittenden, Barry, Bowen, S. P. Sharp and Ben Hardin. This Presbyterian institution of learning —the Presbyterians be it said to their praise have always been leaders in the educational field—was in a flourishing condition under Dr. Holley's administration; great numbers of students flocking from South and West to its halls and class rooms, to sit at the feet of distinguished teachers in their several de-

partments. The Medical College of the University was presided over by two of the most eminent medical teachers in America, the school itself being only second to the great medical institutions of Philadelphia.

Great men were sprouted here, who afterwards bulked to large proportions in the annals of American history. Amongst these were two or three of the celebrated Breckinridge family and the immortal Jefferson Davis of rebellion fame. Many times did I sit, in after years, in the room he occupied in the old dormitory in the college campus, trying to absorb what inspiration I could from the traditional associations of those dingy walls. Lexington in that early day, in addition to its cultural advantages, and its bevy of flaming orators, had one of the ablest literary periodicals of the West, edited by William Gibbs Hunt, and a historic public library hardly second in value to the best in the country.

Neighboring Blue Grass towns, Danville, Richmond, Georgetown, and Harrodsburg had institutions of learning, most of which were of university grade and excellence and were presided over by educators, noted generally for scholarship, literary culture, and oratorical ability. John C. Young, president of Center College in Danville, who was characterized by a competent judge as "a gentleman distinguished for his urbanity and amiability, as well as for his literary and theological attainments," was the man Alexander Campbell hoped would be chosen for his opponent in the great debate. The failure of President Young's health compelled the substitution of another name, very much to the regret of Mr. Campbell, who in his past experience had had enough of bitter sectarian weeds, enough of partisan and hostile zealotry, and very naturally and properly desired that his last and greatest debate should be with an urbane Christian gentleman, whose spirit and bearing would help to give weight and character to the discussion.

The first choice of the Presbyterians to uphold their banner in the great decisive battle of a prolonged ecclesiastical war was Dr. Robt. J. Breckinridge, the greatest of the great family that bore his name, of whom it was said "none has stood higher in the Presbyterian Church in this country for twenty-five years." When approached by the committee, he said emphatically: "No Sir I will never be Alexander Campbell's opponent. A man who has done what he has to defend Chritianity against infidelity, and to defend Protestantism against the delusions and usurpations of Catholicism, I will never oppose in public debate. I esteem him too highly." I was present at this great man's funeral, in my early youth, and was glad to do him honor. A few days before I had listened to a brilliant oration, in the old Lexington Court House by his illustrious kinsman, John C. Breckinridge, a product of the same "Garden of the gods," and perhaps the most silver tongued and handsome of contemporaneous American orators. A young man, at the time of the Campbell and Rice debate, he became in later years vice-president of the United States, ran for president in the campaign that was immortalized by the election of Abraham Lincoln, took part in the civil war as a division commander, under Albert Sydny Johnson at Shiloh, and subsequently under Braxton Bragg, in the great battles of the Western armies, to the close of the war. He was dressed in his rebel grey when I heard him make that speech in the court house.

About half way between Lexington, in Fayette County, and Versailles in Woodford, there is a little school house in the Pisgah neighborhood—it was still there a few years ago—hard by a country Presbyterian sanctuary, situated in a grove of lovely trees in the midst of a noble woodland pasture so much a part of that God-favored land of promise. This little structure, built of hewn logs and pointed with lime, in which young ideas were trained to shoot, was as historic as it seemed to be insignificant. It is always *men* that make *things* great.

Three boys, who lived in sight of each other, in that aristocratic vicinity, first swung their legs under benches in this pent up Utica. Their names were afterwards known to mankind, as John C. Breckinridge, Thomas Marshall and John J. Crittenden, a triad of statesmen spellbinders, unmatched in history, as the product of a single neighborhood. Tom Marshall, as great in thought as he was in expression, who could make a better temperance speech when half drunk than he could when wholly sober, paid a handsome tribute to his native heath and its productive qualities, when he declared that the blue grass region was the garden of Eden and Woodford County the asparagus bed. This section of the original paradise was as celebrated for the production of great men, and beautiful women, and fine horses, as it was happy in the possession of asparagus beds, hemp fields, maize, and burly tobacco fields in later years. My old parishioner, Harry Ward, of Cynthiana, one of Kentucky's greatest criminal lawyers was an entrancing talker of the heroic period of classic oratory. I have heard him expatiate, by the hour, in a most engaging way, of the great forensic battles in which he had measured arms, on equal terms, with the mighty men of whom I have spoken, and others of their kind. Mrs. Haley bisected his stream of talk one evening by thrusting in the question:"but Mr. Ward, what of John J. Crittenden?" "John J. Crittenden," said he, "why John J. at his worst could beat 'em all, and at his best he could beat himself;" shaking his gray locks by way of emphasis, and bringing down his open palms with a resounding slap upon his knees. Brother Ward was a great lover of the Bible, and could defend it against its assailants, in a manner that would have charmed the soul of Alexander Campbell. It was worth while to hear him expound Shakespeare and the Divine Legation of Moses to his Bible class in the Sunday school. He always referred to the Book of books as "God's Bible."

Theological masters of assemblies were quite as numerous

as legal and political spellbinders. There was Jacob Creath, Sr., the man who pronounced the benediction at the close of the great debate, of whom it was said he could become governor of Kentucky at any time he would consent to have his name placed at the head of the ticket in a gubernatorial race. He was an Apollo, and an Apollos of graceful and charming eloquence, not surpassed, and scarcely equalled, by any of his contemporaries. He came with Mr. Campbell into the reformation and became an ornamental figure and a mighty force as a pulpit prodigy of his time. And Raccoon John Smith, with a sun crowned head and a soul of fire, a master of wit and repartee, mighty in word and deed, who baptized paedobaptists and "capsized" Baptists by the thousands; who enjoyed the unique distinction of preaching to a great audience in Mt. Sterling, with only fourteen unconverted people present, all of whom in response to his appeal, surrendered, and made the good confession on the spot. Smith, who was a great admirer and warm friend of Campbell, after hearing him preach a great sermon at a convention in Lexington, went forward and said: "Well, Alex., if you keep on improving you'll make a right smart chunk of a preacher yet." John Augustus Williams, leading educator and founder of Daughter's College at Harrodsburg, another source of influence to impregnate the air with educational forces, and to fertilize the mentality of central Kentucky, wrote the life of John Smith, the first and almost the last classic biography in the literature of the Disciples.

The reformation of Barton W. Stone, another giant of that fermenting era, began to function at Cambridge, another asparagus bed of paradise, in a mighty reaction against French skepticism, English deism, and a world gripping indifferentism, always a concomitant of infidel revolutions. The reform movement of Mr. Stone centering in the blue grass region, took great lumps of butter fat from the Presbyterian churns, which, when combined with the cream Mr. Campbell had

skimmed from Baptist pans, in the same region, made up a union of intelligent religious people, firmly secured ten or twelve years before the debate in Lexington, with a group of gifted preachers, hard to equal in larger communions. Alexander Procter and T. P. Haley were born in the heart of the blue grass region. Proctor was the greatest of the philosophic thinkers, and prophetic interpreters of the Campbellian theology. Haley was our field marshall in the realm of ecclesiastical administration. Their fathers were neighbors and the two boys were first cousins. John A. Brooks, a polished pulpiteer, of a slightly later period, who ran for president on the Prohibition ticket, and Prof. John Shackelford, the only survivor of the "Living Pulpit" published in 1868, except its distinguished editor Dr. W. T. Moore, another lion of the tribe of Judah, who came down from those early days—these two men came from shimmering spots of blue grass, in Mason County, where Mr. Campbell held his second historic debate. Prof. Shackelford won distinction as a life long teacher of recognized ability, in the University of Kentucky, and as the author of a classic biography of Dr. L. L. Pinkerton, another genius of the prophetic order, justly famous as the wielder of classic speech with both tongue and pen, and the founder of the Female Orphan School at Midway, twelve miles from Lexington, the most useful and beneficent of all the institutions established and maintained by the "Reformers," as the Disciples were then called.

But what shall the man say that cometh after the king, except to announce that the king hath spoken? The matchless Henry Clay, monarch of the American Forum, too big a man to enter the small doors of the White House, because he chose to be right rather than president, whose magnetic personality, charm of speech, and compelling intellectual power, did more to generate the passion for oratory, and the appreciation of brains that characterized the blue grass and all Kentucky, than any other single man of the time. This

man was the chairman of the great debate, who presided over all its sessions during the sixteen days of its duration. I shall have more to say of him and his relation to the discussion before I am through.

From these elevated heights of mentality and culture and chain lightening speech, it is not wonderful that currents drifted down, even to low bromidic levels, and every common man became a devout worshipper at the shrine of one or more of these oratorical divinities. John B. Houston another "jury charmer," of the time and place, who spake with the tongues of men and of angels, tells an illustrative story on himself. He was prosecuting a man for murder in a great criminal suit in Irvin, a little mountain town, just across Kentucky River from a blue grass county. As the trial proceeded, he observed a lanky hill-billie, with uncombed hair and folds of skin hanging as loose upon his forehead, as his shocking hat did upon his head, following him about, dogging his heels, staring him out of countenance, until Houston, somewhat annoyed, turned upon him and said: "What is it my friend, do you wish to say something to me?" "Wall" said the mountaineer, in reply, "I was a thinkin' what a great preacher you'd a made if you jist had grace." Just so, these word artists, who played billiards with the stars, had plenty of grey matter in their heads, but very little white matter in their souls. But few of them had much talent for piety, as the French express it, but be it said to their credit, they all reverenced religion and the Bible, and in their way were preachers of righteousness. As for the hill-billie and his leaning to "grace" as well as to oratory, as a type of the period he could have been multiplied by thousands, in all sections of the commonwealth of the Dark and Bloody Ground. Plain common men, so fired by the vision and passion for the union of great ideas and living words, that they would walk miles over rough roads in the dead of winter or heat of summer, and listen with engrossing attention for hours, to great speeches in the court house, or

flaming sermons in the pulpits of neighboring churches. They named their children after these heroes of hustings, forums and pulpits, remembered their great efforts, talked of them to their children, often with tears in their eyes, as long as they had breath to talk of anything. If the intellectuals had failed to fill up the seats in the old Main St. Church in the blue grass capital, during the great debate, their places could have been supplied from neighboring farms, with men and women, who would have listened to the arguments, with the same absorbing attention and appreciation, all except the criticisms in foreign tongues. What an environing atmosphere was this for such a debate as that!

## CHAPTER XVIII

## THE CAMPBELL-RICE DEBATE: "MODE" AND "ACTION" OF BAPTISM

*Baptismal Dispute Still the Crux. More Time and Space and Propositions Devoted to It than All Other Subjects Put Together.*

## PROPOSITION I.

The immersion in water of a proper subject, into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is the one only apostolic or Christian baptism.

*Mr. Campbell affirms.*
*Mr. Rice denies.*

# CHAPTER XVIII

## THE CAMPBELL-RICE DEBATE: "MODE" AND "ACTION" OF BAPTISM

THE sin and shame of the baptismal controversy finds its roots in the greater sin and crime of partisan blindness and sectarian dogmatism. In their blundering efforts to establish theories and speculations of the Christian Religion, no subject, on which men have disputed, in the years of the past, has presented more abundant material, for accurate judgment and final settlement, than the meaning of the word, to "baptize." If our theological dads and ecclesiastical forefathers could have approached the question in the temper and attitude of scientific students, in search of facts, and the truth of things, unclouded by creeds and preconceived opinions, and the choice of a place to land their boat before the voyage began—all of this inheritance of prejudice, ignorance, strife, and divided counsel would not have been dumped on the generations that followed them.

A cursory glance at the literature of the attempted solutions of the baptismal problem fills one with amazement, that so many *facts,* simple, clear, definite, and unmistakable in meaning and application, could ever have been the occasion of slight differences, much less of serious controversies. In this enormous book of 912 pages, 48 are devoted to correspondence and preliminaries; 549 to baptism; 147 to the Holy Spirit, and 153 to human creeds. Four propositions out of six, and two-thirds of the book, are taken up with the different issues relating to baptism; and that is equivalent to saying that two-thirds of the time and space and labor, were consumed in the discussion of an *external*—the spiritual char-

acter of the ordinance was not in dispute—certainly out of all proportion to its relative importance. There is some excuse for differences of opinion and interpretation on mystical questions, like that of the Holy Spirit; and intellectual questions like that of creeds; but, on concrete questions of fact, and the specific meaning and application of the word to "baptize," where there is the least excuse for differences, controversy bulks the fiercest, largest and longest. This arises from that strange Adamic perversity of human nature, that is more concerned for the justification of its theories than it is for the vindication of truth, or the salvation of its soul.

Mr. Campbell's new opponent, Dr. N. L. Rice, makes all of this plain. He was the hardest man to handle of the five. The classic biographer of Mr. Campbell gives us the best account of the disputants and their methods in the discussion of the first proposition, which was:

> The immersion in water of a proper subject in to the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is the only Apostolic or Christian Baptism.

This question could and should have been settled in less space than the correspondence occupied, but was drawn out the longest. It lasted four days, and covered almost as much space, in the printed volume, as any two in the debate. He says that the difference in the intellectual character, and, consequently, in the method, of the two disputants become quite evident from the beginning. In the discussion of the very first proposition Mr. Campbell's tendency to comprehensive views, and his skill in disengaging the grand fundamental principles of things, became manifest in his endeavor to establish the general law: "Where words denote specific actions their derivatives, through all their various flexions and modifications, retain the specific meaning of the root." This law he applied to the word *bapto*, showing that its two thousand flex-

ions and modifications, in retaining the radical syllable *bap,* retained also the radical idea "dip" connected with it. Said he:

> The same holds good of its distant neighbor *raino* "I sprinkle." It has as many flexions and nearly as many derivatives as *bapto*..... These all exhibit the radical syllable *rain* or *rani* and with it the radical meaning, *sprinkle.* Now, as it is philologically impossible to find *bap* in *rani* or *rain* in *bap* so, impossible is it to find *dip* in *sprinkle* or *sprinkle* in *dip.* Hence the utter impossibility of either of these words representing both actions. It is difficult to conceive how any man of letters and proper reflection can, for a moment, suppose that *bapto* can ever mean *sprinkle* or *raino, dip.*

Nor was his ready perception of the resemblance of relations less marked in the illustration he used in order to render the point evident to the apprehension of his hearers. Referring to the custom of the ancient grammarians to present verbs and their derivatives by a tree with its roots, stems and branches, he said:

> Agriculturists, horticlturists, botanists, will fully comprehend me when I say that in all the dominions of vegetable nature, untouched by human art, as the root so is the stem, and so are all the branches. If the root be oak the stem cannot be ash nor the branches cedar. What would you think, Mr. President, of the sanity or veracity of a backwoodsman who would affirm that he found, in the state of nature, a tree whose root was of oak, whose stem was cherry, whose boughs were pear, and whose leaves were chestnut? If these grammarians and philologists have been happy in their analogies, drawn from the root and branches of trees to illustrate the derivation of words, how singularly fantastic the genius that creates a philogical tree whose root is *bapto,* whose stem is *cheo,* whose branches are *rantizo* and whose fruit is *katharizo!*— or, if not too ludicrous and preposterous for English ears, whose root is *dip,* whose trunk is *pour,* whose branches are *sprinkle* and whose fruit is *purification!*

Mr. Campbell's opponent, on the other hand, manifested throughout that he moved in a very different sphere of thought, and was disposed to look at the subjects in their details, rather than in their general features. Hence, while Mr. Campbell

dealt in comprehensive rules, Mr. Rice occupied himself with exceptions. While the former sought to establish principles, the latter tried to overthrow them by burrowing beneath the basis on which they were erected. While the one enlarged the comprehension of his hearers, and illuminated every subject that he touched, the efforts of the other served only to contract their understanding and to involve the subject in darkness and confusion. Thus his reply to the above argument of Mr. Campbell was to deny the general rule asserted, and to adduce the words *"prevent"* and *"conversation,"* as having changed their original meaning, while retaining the radical syllables. Mr. Campbell stated, however, that these were words of generic, and not of specific import, and therefore not legitimately within the rule, though, even in these, the radical syllable still retained its specific meaning. Mr. Rice affected also to rely greatly upon the fact that *bapto* and *baptidzo* were sometimes translated *wash,* and labored to make it appear that this was their *primary* meaning. But Mr. Campbell showed them to be so used by a metonymy of the effect for the cause, according to the well known general principles applying to all words. Mr. Rice affirming that the most reliable New Testament lexicons gave *wash* as the primary meaning. This Mr. Campbell refuted, but, upon its being again and again reiterated, brought forward the celebrated New Testament lexicon of Stokius who says of the word:

1. Generally it obtains the sense of dipping or immersing without respect to water or any liquid whatever.

2. Specially, and in its proper signification, it signifies to dip or immerse in water. This is the New Testament sense.

3. Topically, and by a metalepsis, it means to wash, to cleanse, because a thing is usually dipped or immersed that it may be washed, that it may be cleansed. Its general sense is to dip. Its proper sense to dip in water, its figurative sense, to wash, to cleanse.

Mr. Rice's confusion was such, upon this exposure, that he was quite unable to conceal it from the audience, and he, in vain, endeavored to escape from the dilemma by some evasive assertions in regard to tropes. He also endeavored to place Mr. Campbell in a similar position in reference to an assertion he had made that no translator, ancient or modern, ever rendered *bapto* or any of that family of words, to *sprinkle*. He brought up a passage (Rev. 19:13) which reads in the common version, "He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood," the Greek word for "dipped," in every early manuscript known, being in this place *bebammenon*. Mr. Rice showed that in the ancient Syriac version the passage was rendered so as to read, in English, "He was clothed with a vesture *sprinkled* with blood." He adduced also the Vulgate, which rendered the passage in the same manner. In addition he adduced Origen, who, in quoting the passage almost *verbatim* used *rantizo* instead of *bapto*. He further confirmed the correctness of the rendering *sprinkle* by referring to the sixty-third chapter of Isaiah, to which the passage, in question, evidently has relation, and where the conqueror says, "Their blood shall be *sprinkled* upon my garments."

This, it must be confessed, seemed quite a strong case, but so firmly was Mr. Campbell persuaded that neither *bapto* nor its derivatives, could justly, in any case, be rendered *sprinkle* that he ventured to assert, what indeed had been formerly conjectured by Dr. Gale, that in this place, there must have been in the manuscript from which Origen quoted, and from which the Syriac version was made, *a different reading* (*errantismenon* instead of *bebammenon*) which Jerome, the author of the Vulgate, had adopted. Although no manuscript, then known, gave this reading, Mr. Campbell inferred that there must have been such a reading, from the fact that in all three translations adduced, it occurred in the same passage, the last occurrence of the word in the book. The corresponding passage in Isaiah also confirmed him in the opinion

that the idea of sprinkling had been derived from the language of the prophet by Origen and the version from which he quoted. He insisted, therefore, that with so much probability of a different reading, Mr. Rice was logically bound to show that the word *bebammenon* was actually in the manuscript quoted by Origen, as well as in the one from which the Syriac version was made. This being impossible, Mr. Rice's argument was shown to be logically inconclusive.

It was not, however, merely to refute his opponent's reasoning that Mr. Campbell took this ground. In all his writings and discussions he manifested that spirit of truthful investigation which had guided him from the beginning. Mr. Rice, seemingly incapable of appreciating Mr. Campbell's position on the disputed passage, or of imitating the truth-loving spirit of investigation which it implied, continued, for some time, to make the most of the supposed discovery of an exception to Mr. Campbell's universal rule and to bring up the matter again and again. Said he:

> Although Mr. Campbell has said and published that no translator, ancient or modern, ever rendered any of this family or words to *sprinkle,* I have proved that the translators of the venerable Syriac, the Old Ethiopic and the Vulgate (all of whom, according to him, were immersionists) did so translate *bapto.* But he says "There must have been a different reading." Where is the evidence? Is there any one copy of the New Testament found in all the searching for old manuscripts which presents a different reading? There is not one! Why then, contend for a different reading? Simply because the claims of immersion demand it.

Such was Mr. Rice's charitable estimate of his opponent's integrity that he supposed him capable of contending for a different reading, not in the interest of truth, but merely "because the claims of immersion demanded it." Providence, however, has already singularly verified the postulate assumed by Mr. Campbell, and exposed the fallacy through which "sprinkle" was sought to be interpolated, as a proper or possible rendered of *bapto.* On the 4th of February, 1859, the learned Tis-

chendorf, who was engaged in Oriental researches, happened to be sojourning at the monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai. Returning from a walk in company with the steward, the latter, upon reaching his chamber, placed before the traveller, for his examination, a basket of ancient manuscripts. Among these, to his surprise and delight, he found a complete copy of the New Testament on vellum, which proved to be one of the very oldest and most authentic manuscripts in the world, rivaling even the famous Codex Vaticanus. This precious apograph, published in 1865 by Tischendorf, gives the different reading in Rev. 19:13 that Mr. Campbell contended should be there, thus indicating, in a wonderful way, the soundness of his critical judgment and his intuitive sense of the harmony of truth. This vindication came twenty-two years after the debate, when Mr. Rice's hair was no longer black, and Mr. Campbell was an old man within one year of his translation into a sphere where, according to the great Dr. Parker, no controversialist can enter; but we are consoled by the reflection that there are exceptions to all rules except that *bapto* never means to *sprinkle,* and *raino* never means to dip.

It cannot be justly denied, our witness continues, that throughout the discussion, Mr. Rice manifested acuteness and ingenuity in bringing forward whatever could yield the slightest support to his cause, or that his efforts produced, occasionally, a marked impression on the audience. Having a musical voice and a pleasant countenance, with brilliant black eyes and hair, a confident and positive manner and an agonistic style of gesticulation, he was well fitted to command attention. Having also a large portion of the audience in favor of his propositions, he received from them numerous manifestations of sympathy and approval, which were supposed, by many, to have been even preconcerted for the purpose of manufacturing public opinion. If such were the pur-

pose of the actors in the case, there is not slightest evidence that Mr. Rice instigated such proceedings, though his manner and language, during the discussion, were plainly calculated to encourage manifestations of applause and merriment, which it was his duty to repress as especially unbecoming in the discussion of serious subjects.

Mr. Rice's remarkable fluency of speech, superior talent for managing minute details, his consummate art in presenting false issues, and evading the true ones, gave him great influence over the minds of those unskilled in the detection of fallacious reasoning. He seldom indeed appeared to rise to the dignity of the subject, and both his arguments and his expressions were often of an *ad captandum* character. The characteristic and worst features of his speeches, however, were the personal bearing and the hostile spirit which he imparted to them. He had scattered upon his table many volumes of Mr. Campbell's works, and seemed to take an especial pleasure in quoting and referring to his writings, so as to make him appear inconsistent or place him in an unfavorable light before the audience rather than in discussing the propositions upon their own merits. This course gave to the entire discussion a certain degree of asperity and acrimony, and fostered, on the part of the audience personal and denominational feelings and prejudices.

These feelings ran very high at times, and gave rise to amusing incidents. Two ladies in the gallery were earnestly engaged in maintaining the merits of their respective disputants. "Ah," said one of them to the other as a closing and convincing argument, "you can easily see that Mr. Rice is by far the most learned man. Just see how many books he has on his table, while Mr. Campbell has hardly any." "But you don't appear to know," retorted the other, "that the books on Mr. Rice's table were *written* by Mr. Campbell."

On another occasion, after dismission, a Mr. Irwin of Madison County, a warm friend of Mr. Campbell, was complaining of poor health, and remarked that he had not eaten anything for a number of days. "Ah," said Col. Speed Smith, jocularly, "you have been feeding on camel (Campbell)." "Not so," said the Presbyterian preacher, Mr. Brown, who was also from Madison, "I believe he has been living on rice (Rice) during these days." "If so," rejoined Col. Smith, "he has been living on *extremely light diet.*"

## CHAPTER XIX

## THE CAMPBELL-RICE DEBATE: PURPOSE OF BAPTISM

*Infant Affusion and Baptism for the Remission of Sins. Some Interesting Points of History and Argument Connected with Both Subjects.*

## PROPOSITIONS II, III, IV.

2. The infant of a believing parent is a scriptural subject of baptism. Mr. Rice affirms. Mr. Campbell denies.

3. Christian baptism is for the remission of past sins. Mr. Campbell affirms. Mr. Rice denies.

4. Baptism is to be administered only by a bishop or ordained presbyter. Mr. Rice affirms. Mr. Campbell denies.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE CAMPBELL-RICE DEBATE: PURPOSE OF BAPTISM

THE debate on the action or mode of baptism, noticed briefly in the last chapter, was the most exhaustive and scholarly in the history of the baptismal controversy. It was the decisive battle of the war on the meaning of the Greek word to baptize. Of course there were many hotly contested engagements in subsequent years, as in the case of the Great World War, after the decisive battle of the Marne. It always requires time, after a great decision has been registered, to beat down into the consciousness of the opposition, the fact of its overthrow. No educated person, with even a minimum of knowledge on the subject, any longer appeals to the New Testament as authority for the practice of sprinkling and pouring as permissible forms of administering the ordinance of Christian baptism.

Those who continue the practice of sprinkling and pouring do so on the claim that the church had a right, under the circumstances, on the score of convenience, to change the form; or, on the well worn assumption expressed by Dean Stanley, that the change from immersion to affusion was the triumph of sanctified common sense, over bondage to form and custom. This assertion of the learned Dean, however, appearing to raise a new question, merely throws us back on the old issue of human authority in religion, and the right of man to change divine ordinances, or to exercise legislative functions in the kingdom of God. The New Testament settles that point, quite as effectually, as it does the original question of the form of Christian baptism, and it is good sanctified common sense, into the bargain, as we shall see, when we come to a word on the significance of religious forms in the Christian system.

In the proposition affirming the divine origin of infant baptism, there is nothing of particular interest, not already noticed, except, Mr. Rice's repudiation of one of the main pillars on which the practice in question had chiefly rested in previous debates; the doctrine that baptism had come in the room of circumcision, which was to say, as male infants born into the religio-political commonwealth of Israel, had the national and racial sign of circumcision placed upon them, all infants born of Christian parents, whether male or female, had a right to baptism, the sign and seal of the new covenant in Christ. In the debate with McCalla, twenty years before, we called attention to the quite unusual phenomenon that Mr. Campbell had so effectively shattered the timbers of this argumentative structure that no effort had ever been made to rebuild it, except by some incautious fellow, who had not kept up with the history of the discussion. If the reader will pardon a personal reference, as speakers and writers always say, when they are going to say too much about themselves, I once had an experience with a twofold significance in its relation to this incident of the great debate.

Quite a number of years ago, in the verdant days when I was always ready for "spute," in the Temperance Hall, Melbourne, Australia, I held a five nights' debate with a Methodist minister named Butchers, on the usual baptismal issues between our pædobaptist brethren and ourselves. I had engaged in a previous written discussion with him in my paper, *The Australian Christian Watchman* and the Wesleyan Connectional organ, *The Spectator,* published in the same city, in which he attempted to build the bridge of infant baptism on two pillars, as he expressed it; the identity of the covenants and of baptism in the room of circumcision. I blew up those pillars with gun-cotton, obtained from Mr. Campbell in the debate with McCalla; expecting, of course, that Mr. Butchers would attempt their reconstruction in the oral debate, soon to follow.

In preparing for this final tilt to be taken down and published in book form, I packed in a bigger charge than before and was lying in wait, itching for a chance to blast those pillars, especially the circumcision pillar, the easier one to demolish. Fancy, if you can, my surprise and utter disgust. when my opponent coolly and with sinful deliberation, and apparently without consciousness of inconsistency, as against his past record, repudiated his circumcision pillar, said as he did not need it, that he would make me a present of it, and proceeded, as though nothing had happened, to swing his bridge on one pillar, the identity of the covenants, which meant, as you understand, that the old Jewish commonwealth, under Moses, was the same institution as the Christian Church established by the Holy Spirit in the Apostles. I knew at once what had happened. This is what Rice had done. The next evening, as we sat in a little room back of the platform, chatting with the chairman, in waiting for the discussion to begin, I said,

Brother Butchers, I perceive, sir, that you have been feeding on rice (Rice) of late.

It was a center shot which threw him into a great state of confusion: he blushed crimson red up to the roots of his dark hair, stammered out something that was not intelligible; but in a moment or two, he recovered himself sufficiently to say:

Well, yes, I sent to England for the Campbell and Rice debate, and it arrived only ten days ago, just in time for a hasty reading of the discussion on baptism.

I replied:

I will not give you away, Bro. Butchers. I will not tell on you, but I will take the liberty of making a suggestion. Instead of appealing to the scriptures for authority and evidence to justify sprinkling as a mode of baptism, and infant affusion as a divine ordinance, where these doctrines are not found, as you well know, why don't you fall back on Dean Stanley to justify the change from immersion to affusion and on Henry Ward Beecher's ox yoke argument to vindicate the practice of infant baptism? This would put the two

institutions on a pragmatic basis, and we are living in an age dominated by the pragmatic philosophy. It would be much easier to meet the attacks of your opponents, whereas when you claim biblical authorization for these practices, any Sunday school teacher of ordinary intelligence, as a mere breakfast spell, can overthrow the greatest scholar in the Methodist church.

He did not adopt my suggestion, and I was glad of it, for the obvious reason already assigned. This incident illustrates, in another direction. The munitions of war, all the bullets fired and all the powder to fire them, and all the bayonets that glittered on many a bloodless field of glory, clear down to the end of the polemic era, and throughout the entire English speaking world, were chiefly drawn from the factory set up by Messrs. Campbell and Rice in Lexington, Kentucky, in the year of our Lord, 1843. All the material is here, nothing has been added since, little has been altered, nothing has been better said, the seal of historic finality is still unbroken.

The third proposition in the baptismal series, viz., "Christian Baptism is for the remission of past sins," Mr. Campbell regarded as of more vital importance than any of the others, because of the meaning of the ordinance and its relation to salvation. His first speech of an hour in length, was a written composition, a little too excursive and comprehensive for the best immediate effect in public discussion in the presence of a mixed audience. It was in this particular that Mr. Rice was always at his best. His language was simple and clear, his thought superficial, he never soared so high nor delved so deep, nor traveled so far afield that the people could not easily follow him, and, beyond all this, he had a saving sense of humor, which Mr. Campbell possessed also, but would not use in the discussion of serious, and solemn questions of our holy religion.

The distinctive feature, however, of this first address was a majestic and telling array of proof texts, alleging in plain and untwistible words the connection of baptism and the remission of sins. His key passage, it goes without saying, was

Acts 2:38, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." He did not fail, of course, to point out that the Greek and Latin church fathers, scholars of the middle ages as well as modern scholars, and all the historic creeds of Christendom, including the Westminster Confession of faith, the one Mr. Rice was solemnly pledged to maintain, one and all, taught in terms explicit and unmistakable, the historic and catholic doctrine of baptism for the remission of sins. The only question remaining was the meaning of remission and its association with baptism as an ordinance of religion.

Mr. Rice's reply to this first long speech was characteristic of him in more ways than one. He first sought a specific understanding, so he claimed, of the exact issue involved, and he did this, not by attending to the definitions and qualifications of his position, just stated by his opponent, but by going back to Mr. Campbell's first book, *Christianity Restored,* and to his first paper the *Christian Baptist,* reading long extracts from each, in which he found, at least, one of those unfortunate statements made by Mr. Campbell in the moil and heat of the early days of the baptismal dispute. Mr. Rice found exactly what he was looking for in the declaration that the post-apostolic fathers and scholars of the church used immersion as the exact equivalent of regeneration, using another word to express the spiritual element that made the change, at the beginning of the regenerate life. From this and a few other statements of the same kind he deduced the conclusion that his opponent taught the absolute and literal essentiality of immersion in water in order to the remission of past sins, the crassest form of the odious doctrine of baptismal regeneration; from which another harrowing deduction followed. A man, for instance, who was converted on the first day of the month and had to wait till the 31st to be baptized, would have to wait thirty days for pardon and salvation and,

if he should chance to die before the expiration of the time, he would go unpardoned and be lost!

He then proceeded to file objections to a doctrine involving such horrific and intolerable consequences. He collated, compiled and brought into view all of that numerous class of passages which ascribe salvation and justification to faith. He then said, by way of application, "If these passages, from the Word of God are true, Mr. Campbell's construction of Acts 2:38 is false and his whole line of defense broken in the center." As a very obvious matter, of course, Mr. Campbell believed these scriptures cited by Mr. Rice, and had brought them all into a perfectly consistent relation to his interpretation of the central passage in dispute. At this point Mr. Rice asked the chairman how much time he had, "Fifteen minutes" said Mr. Clay. He had spoken 45 minutes without attempting to answer anything Mr. Campbell had said in his opening address.

He then paid a brief visit to Jerusalem and the day of Pentecost and took a side glance at the threatening passage that blocked and bisected his path of travel. He brought up Matt. 3:11 to offset the pentecostal stronghold of his opponent: "I indeed baptize you in water (εις) unto repentance." "Now," said Mr. Rice, "will my friend maintain that John baptized the Jews *in order* that they might repent—to cause them to repent of their sins! If he will not, how can he maintain that Peter commanded baptism in order to the remission of sins? The mode of expression in both cases is precisely the same." Yes, the two constructions are one; they are exactly alike. Candidly, it began to look as if this assault of the enemy might compel Mr. Campbell to surrender his Malikoff in Acts 2:38. But the God of criticism and prophecy seemed always to be on the side of Bethany.

Quite recently a classmate of mine, in the old College of the Bible, at Lexington, nearly fifty years ago, said to me, and he laughed when he said it, "Do you suppose that McGarvey

continued to the end to teach his students that John baptized those Jews in the wilderness in order that they might repent to save Acts 2:38 to the cause of primitive Christianity?" Of course, I could not answer his question, although I distinctly recalled the fact that he was not misrepresenting the teaching in those days of our much esteemed professor. Shortly after this conversation I opened into the Twentieth Century New Testament, and I did again before beginning to write this sentence and, wonderful to relate, found that time once more had vindicated Alexander Campbell as it has so often done before in these studies. This scholarly translation into English "as she is spoke," notwithstanding the similarity of these parallel constructions in Greek, does not render them the same in English. Matt. 3:11 is rendered, "I indeed baptize you with water to teach repentance." Acts 2:38 is rendered, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the faith of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins: and then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The first rendering throws a world of light on immersion, and the necessity of its preservation, in terms of its spiritual and ethical evaluation. There were two teachers of the clean life of righteousness at the time of John's administration in the wilderness, the personality of the harbinger, and his baptism in water. Verbal preaching that reached the soul through the ear, and symbolic teaching that reached the mind through the eye. An ordinance of religion is a *method,* and the best method of *imparting* and *impressing* the fundamental truths of the religious life. Immersion, as a sacrament of faith, signifies the clean life of spiritual character. The Lord's Supper means the sacrificial life of spiritual service. These two make up the essentials, yes, the vitals of the Christian religion.

It appeared to superficial people, then as now, that these two giants were wasting their time and strength and causing a lot of trouble in disputing over a mere form. But it was

not a mere form. The religion of Jesus knows nothing of mere forms. While the question of material form was the least of its characteristic features, it was a *teacher* of vital religion in which form was as much a necessity as a body is to a soul in the present stage of human existence. To make the change from immersion to sprinkling or pouring or a slight moistening with the touch of finger balls, almost as dry as the prohibition amendment to the constitution of the United States is in our day, means the total destruction of both the *symbolism* and the *psychology,* and hence the *testifying* and *teaching* functions of Christian baptism.

When Mr. Campbell referred to his old statement, brought up by Mr. Rice, that immersion and regeneration were interchangeable terms, he made it plain that his meaning, all the time, had been, not that immersion was regeneration, but that immersion was the *symbol* of regeneration, the plain and obvious truth of the matter. To make his meaning plain in this connection he quoted the Westminster Confession to the effect that "baptism was the outward sign of an inward grace," and, giving it his unqualified endorsement, said, "My friend, Mr. Rice, who pledged in his ordination vows to preach and maintain this conception of baptism, does not appear in this discussion to believe one word of it."

The representation of Mr. Campbell as teaching the absolute and literal and universal indispensability of water baptism, in order to the remission of sins, he meets by a parallel instance applied to his opponent. Mr. Rice believed that the Bible was essential to the salvation of the heathen world. But the Bible, literally and from a materialistic point of view, is made of rags, oil, and lamp-black. Now, suppose, said he—I am not quoting his words, but the substance of what he said—that I go out and circulate the report that the Rev. N. L. Rice of the Presbyterian church teaches and believes that rags, oil, and lamp-black are essential to the salvation of the heathen. Of course it would be understood that these things

were the material elements, through which the message of life was made known to the lost souls of heathen men and women. The application was easy to make that water performed a similar office in religion as the physical element through which the message of truth and life and the assurance of forgiveness, was conveyed to the souls of men.

The way Mr. Rice answered Mr. Campbell's illustration comes near convicting him of the charge of Moses E. Lard, that he was "tricky and unprincipled," if not something worse. He said: "The pagans, he seems to think, are sent to hell, for a very small matter, only because they have not rags, oil, and lamp-black! I had supposed, that they were pretty well furnished with rags, and perhaps with oil and lamp-black. I have never heard any complaint on that score (a laugh). But if the gentlemen says they have not, I have nothing to say (continued laughter) if he chooses to represent the Bible as only rags, lamp-black and oil, let him do so. The pagans, however, are responsible only for the light they have." Mr. Campbell deplored the irreverence, levity, flippant trifling with a solemn subject—not to mention the shocking dishonesty of the misrepresentation, and then proceeded with his argument.

## CHAPTER XX

## THE CAMPBELL-RICE DEBATE: THE HOLY SPIRIT

*The Operation of the Holy Spirit in Conversion and Sanctification. Another Great Speech by Mr. Campbell. Henry Clay Captivated by its Eloquence and Power. The Little Adverb "Only" the Biggest Word in the Proposition.*

## PROPOSITION V.

In conversion and sanctification, the Spirit of God operates on persons only through the word of truth.

*Mr. Campbell affirms.*
*Mr. Rice denies.*

# CHAPTER XX

## THE CAMPBELL-RICE DEBATE: THE HOLY SPIRIT

THE opening address of Mr. Campbell on the affirmative of the proposition that "In conversion and sanctification the Spirit of God operates on persons only through the Word," was a club of Hercules entwined with flowers. For rhetorical sublimity, literary finish, beauty and brilliancy of diction, to say nothing of the effort, as an argumentative thunderbolt, it equalled, if it did not surpass, the greatest efforts of Daniel Webster, Patrick Henry, John Quincy Adams, or Wendell Phillips, in a different field. Dr. Richardson says of this address, "It has been greatly and deservedly admired for its beauty of diction, its clearness of statement, and its power of argument." He describes the effect it produced on the mind of Henry Clay, who himself was one of the supreme spell-binders of all time. Said Dr. Richardson:

> It was remarked that Henry Clay, who had been very careful to avoid, previously, the slightest appearance of favoring either disputant, was so captivated by it as, for a time, to forget himself. A gentleman, well acquainted with him, noticed soon after Mr. Campbell began that he became unusually attentive and, as the subject became unfolded and successive arguments were presented, that he leaned forward and began to bow assent, waving his hand, at the same time, in that graceful, approving manner peculiar to him. While the gentleman was observing this, with some surprise, as he never before, except upon one occasion, had found Mr. Clay to be so carried away by a public speaker, the latter, suddenly recollecting himself, drew himself back and looked to see if any one had noticed him thus off his guard.

A high dignitary, in the Episcopal church, writing, soon after in *The Protestant Churchman,* thus spoke of it and of the disputants:

With the exception of a few unguarded expressions, and that he affirms a *universal,* where only a general can be proved, Mr. Campbell's affirmative argument, on the point that "The Holy Spirit in conversion and sanctification operates only through the word" is one of the most splendid specimens of eloquent reasoning I ever remember to have read. So, also apply to over expanded creeds—the Westminster Confession, for instance—what he recklessly charges upon all creeds, and more thrilling or magnificent declamation can hardly anywhere be found than that interwoven in the closing debate.

After referring to other specimens of Mr. Campbell's lofty and powerful argumentation he adds:

Mr. Rice is wholly incapable of this sort of thing. His imagination is as barren as the surface of granite.

After preliminary definitions, and observations, Mr. Campbell argued his proposition from the plain and positive statements of Holy Scripture, the constitution of the human mind, and the well-known laws of mental and moral communication. This Episcopalian writer accuses him of introducing a *universal* where only a *general* can be proved. Is that a fact? Mr. Rice joined in the accusation and declared that Mr. Campbell's theory of spiritual influence limited the power of God, without a corresponding limitation on the devil's *modus operandi,* who could communicate by direct impact and without the use of means. Supposed analogies of this character, however, fall many leagues short of proving that the infinite can enter into communication with the finite without, necessarily, limiting himself.

Our modern psychology teaches us that neither God nor the devil, nor any other outside personality, can put ideas or knowledge into the mind without the use of medial instrumentalities. Words are the vehicle of ideas and ideas are the vehicles of life, and I should like to see mental, moral or spiritual life conveyed, from one personality to another, without the medium of words or material signs that represent words. I am not nearly so sure that Mr. Campbell made a

mistake, when he put the word "only" into his proposition, as I was five years ago, when I wrote the following paragraph in my little work on the "Markers and Moulders of the Reformation Movements":

Mr. Campbell, in his great debate with N. L. Rice at Lexington, Kentucky, in 1843, on the subject of spiritual influence, affirmed this proposition: "The Holy Spirit, in conversion and sanctification, operates only through the Truth." The argument in support of this thesis is perhaps the most eloquent to be found in the literature of the Spirit's relation to saint and sinner, but it fails to carry conviction to the religious mind of today. Mr. Rice agreed with Mr. Campbell that the spirit operated through the truth, but denied that it operated through the truth only. He said, in his criticism of the adverb in the proposition, "If the Holy Spirit operates through the truth only, why does Mr. Campbell pray for the conversion of sinners?" Why not preach the word and leave the truth to do its work without the invocation of an influence outside of both? If the affirmation is true, said the Presbyterian Divine, that the Spirit is shut up to the word of truth, the devil is more resourceful and powerful than God, for he reaches the minds of men without the intervention of words. Mr. Campbell did not answer these points, but the Disciples for more than a generation have answered them by the elimination of the word "only."

I said further on the same page:

Our people have been among the first to learn that the principal, though not the exclusive channel, of the Spirit's operation in conversion and sanctification, is the personality of regenerated and consecrated men and women. The circulation of the inspired word, in heathen lands, makes few, if any, converts until Word and Spirit find the opportunity of incarnation and holy character, in the missionary, who carries to the dark lands of the earth, the message of salvation.

This last statement is true enough, but the other conclusion was hasty and is not sustained by the facts.

A careful and critical re-reading of the discussion has convinced me that Mr. Campbell made no mistake in the use of the word *"only."* The two points about praying for the conversion of sinners, and the devil's abstract and mystical oper-

ations in carrying on his work, needed no answer, because all such objections had been forestalled by the definitions and qualifications of Mr. Campbell's first address, to which, as usual, Mr. Rice paid no attention. He preferred dodging the real issue, in artful attempts to create false ones, by reading long irrelevant extracts from Mr. Campbell's books, written twenty years before, and treating of other aspects of the theme in hand. In reply to the charge that he "limited the power of God," Mr. Campbell said,

> I do limit the power of God, because he himself has limited it. * * * The Universalian accuses Mr. Rice of limiting the power of God because he makes salvation depend upon faith and a holy life. When Mr. Rice defends himself from that charge his defence shall be mine from his charge of limitation.

In his second address he said:

> I believe God presides over all the works of his hands. But that is not the point of debate; nor is it the question about what God can or cannot do—whether, or not, he turns the hearts of things and mortals as the channels of the rivers or seas are turned. Whether he disposes the hearts of men without words, is not the question; for were it proved that he can move kings and princes, and men of all ranks and degrees, as I believe, without the Bible and without words, that reaches not this issue at all. The question before us is about conversion and sanctification. The question is whether *God converts men* to Christ or *sanctifies* Christians, *without the truth of the Bible.*

There is not a case on record known to us, and if celestial wisdom and earthly common sense and the laws of intercourse and communion between mind and mind, count for anything, there is never likely to be one.

But why debate insoluble questions of mystery and miracle, concerning which we know little and comprehend less? Why not leave the Holy Spirit to operate in his own way, as he will do and must do, in any event? This resembles a contemporaneous quarrel as to the priority of faith or repentance in the conversion of sinners. When a generation of orthodox

zealots had wasted much of God's precious time and their own feeble strength in a dispute as to whether faith preceded repentance, or repentance faith, in the mental and moral processes of conversion, they woke up, one fine morning, to the consciousness of enough sense to realize that if men believed and repented at all, they *must* believe and repent in the right way. The Spirit of God must choose the modes of his own activity, and when he moves, although in "a mysterious way his wonders to perform," it will be the right way, the way that chords with the constitution of the universe, and his own constitution as well.

But there was a method in Mr. Campbell's madness, when he introduced the limiting adverb into the proposition on the operations of the Holy Spirit. It was not to limit the power of God. It was to limit the errors, ignorances, and superstitions of men, who, by their traditions, theories and wild speculations had made void the Word of God. Mr. Rice was keenly alive to the fact that defeat, on this proposition, spelled the doom of his precious Calvinism. The center of his battle line was the old Calvinistic dogma of hereditary total depravity, man's absolute inability to think a good thought, or do a good deed, to believe, repent or receive the gospel, till this abstract impact and miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, had communicated resurrection life to the dead soul, after which it could hear, understand, believe, and be converted.

This theological and inhuman concept of current Calvinism hung like a pall of midnight darkness over the minds of men, creating the delusion that they were unable to repent without a special abstract visitation of miraculous power, which, if it never came, left them without responsibility, in the matter of their own salvation. This blighting heresy of Calvinism went the length of teaching that infants were regenerated by the abstract influence of the Holy Spirit and Mr. Rice went the extreme limit of all that was absurd and

unintelligent in the assertion that John the Baptist was thus regenerated before he was born. This senseless and impossible notion, farther back in the history of the church, became the basis of the preposterous heresy of baptismal regeneration. This doctrine of miraculous regeneration by direct impact and contact of the Holy Spirit before man could believe, repent, or be held responsible for his sins, was the crux of Mr. Rice's position, and practically in this crisis of American Christianity, the greatest conceivable hindrance to the progress of the gospel of our divine Lord.

It was this fact that drove Barton W. Stone out of Presbyterian Calvinism into the universality of the love of God and the atonement of Jesus Christ as these sublime truths were taught in the New Testament. All of the Stone and Campbell preachers of those early days always occupied the first half of their sermons in a systematic and thorough going refutation of Calvinism. Racoon John Smith used to say, when he preached two hours as he often did, that he spent the first hour in "clearing the ground" as he expressed it, that is in refuting and overturning the obstructive and destructive theories of Calvin's theology, then the dominant faith of the country, from which he had just been delivered by Alexander Campbell. I once heard a Methodist preacher pray, "Lord, come into the lumber rooms of our hearts and brush out the cobwebs." Our early preachers of the New Testament evangel, found it necessary with a mighty gospel broom in hand, to invade the "lumber rooms" of our sanctuaries to sweep out the "cobwebs" of Calvinian metaphysics and kindred accumulations, before it was possible to get enough light and truth in to do the saving work they had in view. Mr. Campbell speaks of the practical consequences of the brand of teaching he seeks to overthrow in this debate. He said:

> I believe not only in the Holy Spirit, but in a religion of which this divine agent is both the substance, origin, cause, and reason. But sir, in my humble opinion, this metaphysical abstraction, this theological speculation, this electric immedial operation that makes

an infant or a pagan *holy* in a moment, has been the most soul ruining dogma ever invented, preached or propagated. It has slain its tens of thousands. It has made skeptics, fanatics, despondents, and visionaries, without number and without limit.

And he went on to say in scorching words, but none too scorching,

These elect infants, elect pagans, elect idiots, on whom God acts when, where and how he pleases, but makes them *holy* in a moment, without light, knowledge, faith, or love, are figments of distempered brains, the creatures of religious romance, the offspring of a metaphysical delusion, for which there is no cure, but in the rational reading and study of the book of God.

It is a matter of common knowledge that this theory of spiritual influence, in its practical workings, played "high jinks" with emotional and temperamental folk. Mr. Campbell cites a well authenticated instance of a woman who, in reciting her "experience," declared that "The Holy Spirit went through me from head to foot, bursting off the nails from my fingers and toes." It was to eliminate this vulgar mysticism, with its gruesome and ridiculous manifestations, and to open way for the sane and simple gospel of the power of God, that Mr. Campbell inserted the little qualifier "only" in his affirmation. It was by all odds the biggest and most significant word in the proposition. Without it there would have been no affirmative for Mr. Campbell and no negative for Mr. Rice, no difference between the disputants, and no debate on the Holy Spirit.

The stars in their courses seemed always to be fighting for this man Campbell, who was the arch heretic of his day. The time element involved has vindicated him absolutely in all his fundamental contentions. Even the psychic and pneumatic phenomena, so much in vogue just now, with its scientific appraisal and demonstration, brings messages across the line, and puts them into the minds of men in the flesh, in the same old way of super-mundane revelations at the beginning. Vague impressions may be made by the naked impact of spirit,

but intelligible ideas, and definite knowledge, use the old vehicular and medial agencies employed by men who communicate with each other in the body. Our wireless messages skip through space along rhythmic waves of ether. These messages contain ideas expressed in words that find material record and transmission at the near end of the line. Ether is matter, like all other physical substances, only finer and more attenuated in quality. The soul is ethereal and hence the scientific demonstration of the indestructibility of matter is also the scientific demonstration of the immortality of the soul. If there is such a thing as the *literal impact* of spirit upon spirit the elements of materiality and instrumentality would necessarily enter into the account and then what would become of the metaphysical abstraction of Mr. Rice's proposition?

Victory or defeat in debate is not decided by the hotly expressed opinions of partizans on either side. Wait till the clash and crash of battle has been silenced by time and the smoke and grime of conflict cleared away, and people have had time to pull themselves together, and to do a little thinking; then "look 'round you" and take account of what has happened.

In a quarter of a century after this debate, an agitation for the revision of the Westminster Confession of Faith sprang up in brainy Scotland, and quickly spread to the rest of the English speaking world. After a decade or so of bitter discussion with enough crimination and recrimination to discredit all the creeds of Christendom, the reactionaries of the Kirk gave way in confusion, and the army of revision took possession of the field. The method adopted was not by modification nor abolition of the old historic formulary, but by substitution and contradiction. They inserted a new creed, which they tacked on to the old one without any effort to bridge the two documents into any kind of logical or moral relationship to each other. The practical effect of this abro-

gation of the codified, certificated doctrines of hereditary total depravity, abstract spiritual influence, particular grace, limited atonement, election and reprobation, was a complete vindication and an unqualified endorsement of Alexander Campbell's position in his debate with Rice. The whole Presbyterian communion, in its capacity as a gospel preaching brotherhood, came over in a body to the Stone and Campbell interpretation of the universality of the atonement, the love of God, the ability and responsibility of man, and the proclamation of the gospel as the power of God for salvation to all who believe. This was a victory sure enough, gained under the most trying conditions of prejudice and persecution, the greatest triumph of the series, except the next and last one on human creeds.

## CHAPTER XXI

# THE CAMPBELL-RICE DEBATE: HUMAN CREEDS AND CHRISTIAN UNION

*The Last Proposition of the Campbell and Rice Debate, and the Most Important.*

## PROPOSITION VI.

Human creeds, as bonds of union and communion, are necessarily heretical and schismatical.

*Mr. Campbell affirms.*
*Mr. Rice denies.*

# CHAPTER XXI

## THE CAMPBELL-RICE DEBATE: HUMAN CREEDS AND CHRISTIAN UNION

FROM the superficial point of view of "lookers on in Venice" and others, who might and should have known better, it appeared that Mr. Campbell had no advantage over his opponent in the discussion of creeds and their bearings on the vital and all important question of the union of Christians. Dr. Richardson says of Mr. Rice in this part of the debate:

> Ingeniously availing himself of the cases in which considerable difference of sentiment had been tolerated among the Reformers, and of Mr. Campbell's candor in acknowledging, occasionally in his writings, the existing deficiencies amongst his brethren, he managed, by exaggerating these, and by means of incorrect statements, imaginary cases, and feigned issues, to create, for a time, the impression upon some, even who had been opposed to creeds, that they were, by no means, so injurious or unnecessary as had been supposed.

It was further remarked that Rice, in his attempt to excite religious fears and prejudices upon this subject, was greatly aided by the circumstance that Mr. Campbell's view of the true grounds of Christian Union was so far in advance of the age as not to be yet really and fully understood by the community in general.

The chief purpose of our champion of reformation, in this discussion of creeds, was unification. This was a war to end war by removing the causes of war. The upas tree of the sectarian blight, found its tap root in the poison of an intellectualism, that grew above ground in the form of opinionative and divisive secretarian creeds. This tree had to be pulled bodily out of the ground, and the earth sweetened by the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, before it could be made to

bear the fruit of the spirit. Mr. Campbell lost no opportunity to present the basic principles of the Christian union plea he was making before the world. He took occasion early in the discussion of the creed proposition to say

> We all see that Christendom is at present in an agitated, dislocated condition—cut up, or frittered down, into sects and parties innumerable, wholly unwarranted by right reason, pure religion, the Bible, or the God of the Bible. Before the high and holy and puissant intelligences of earth and heaven this state of things is most intolerable. I have for some five and twenty years regarded creeds as both cause and effect of partyism and the main perpetuating cause of schism, and have remonstrated and inveighed against them. Not like many, who oppose creeds because they first oppose their peculiar tenets, we oppose them on their own demerits, and not because they oppose us. In this particular, at least, if on no other account, we differ from the great majority of those who oppose them, because parties were sustained by them, because they made new parties, and because they were roots of bitterness and apples of discord, we opposed them.

Mr. Campbell then turned for a moment, to the constructive and substitutionary side of his proposition:

> In lieu of them we tender the book that God gave us. We regard the Lord Jesus Christ as King, Lord, Lawgiver and Prophet of the church, and well qualified by the power of the Holy Spirit, to give us all a perfect volume—one in substance and form exactly adapted as he would have it for just such a family as the great family of man; we believe the Lord Jesus was wiser and more benevolent than all his followers in their united wisdom and benevolence, and that as he could and would give them such a book as they needed. It is both the light of salvation and the bond of union amongst the saved. We abjure creeds simply as substitutes—directly or indirectly, substitutes—for the book of inspiration. In other respects we have no objection whatever to any people publishing their tenets or views or practices to the world. I have no more objection to writing my opinions than to speaking them.

His affirmative that "Human creeds as bonds of union and communion are necessarily heretical and schismatical," was made perfectly clear by these definite statements. The documentation of religious ideas and theological opinions for explanatory and propagandist uses, was quite innocuous, if not

entirely harmless. The Reformers abjured these documents only when they were turned into authoritative symbols, hardened into finalities, and made terms of communion, bonds of union, tests of fellowship, and conditions of membership in the church. The personality of Jesus of Nazareth, which includes his nature, his character, and his ideals, they regarded as the creed of Christianity, the object of faith, the thing to be believed; the inspired writings of apostles and prophets as the rule of faith and morals, and the means of spiritual edification. Mr. Campbell further said in the connection from which I have just quoted:

> We preach in the words of that book the gospel as promulgated by the apostles in Jerusalem. We use in all important matters the exact words of inspiration. We command all men to believe, to repent, to bring forth fruits worthy of reformation. We enjoin the same good words commanded by the Lord and by his apostles. We receive men of all denominations under heaven, of all sects and parties, who will make the good confession on which Jesus Christ builded his church. We propound that confession of the faith in the identical words of inspiration, so that they who avow it express a divine faith and build upon a consecrated foundation—a well tried corner stone. On a sincere confession of this faith we immerse all persons, and then present them with God's own book as their book of faith, piety, and morality. This is our most obnoxious offense against the partyism of this age.

The arguments used against human creeds as bonds of union and tests of fellowship, as standards of ministerial worthiness, and conditions of church membership may be briefly summarized at this point:

1. Human creeds are without divine authority. God commanded no one to make them, no one to write them, and no church to receive them.
2. They always have a tendency in time of defection to cast out the good, the intelligent, the pure, and to retain those of a contrary opinion. They retain the lees and rack off the pure wine. They killed the Savior, the apostles, the prophets, the saints, and the non-conformists of all ages, since the days of Daniel the prophet.
3. They have generally been intolerant, proscriptive, and overbearing. (This Mr. Campbell declared, needed no demonstration.)

4. They usurp legislative and juridic functions that belong rightfully to Christ and the Holy Spirit. They are treasonable attempts to dethrone the liege king, lawgiver and prophet of the church.

5. Human creeds are divinely prohibited by several precepts of holy scripture, such as: "Hold fast the form of sound words, which you have heard from me;" "Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;" "Hold fast the traditions which you have heard from us, whether by word or by our epistle;" "This is my beloved son, *hear* ye *him.*"

6. Stress was laid upon the important fact that the interval between the death of the apostles and the beginning of the third century, was the purest, and most harmonious, united, prosperous, and happy period of the church, when it had no creed whatever but the apostolic writings.

7. These creeds necessarily became constitutions of churches, and as such, embody and perpetuate the elements of Schism from generation to generation.

8. By attaching the mind to party shibboleths they detach it from a free and unconstrained consecration of itself to the whole truth of God's book. They put religious emphasis in the wrong place. They emphasize intellectual opinions and dogmas more than spiritual life and moral character. They stop growth by making it the worst of crimes to grow.

9. Creeds are unfavorable to spirituality. By presenting truth in the cold, anatomical, formulary outlines of speculative propriety, they call for a mere intellectual effort of the understanding, and touch not the moral feelings of the heart.

10. They have been always and everywhere hostile to reformation and to all progress by putting out of the synagogue godly and intelligent ministers of religion. *All of the great reformers and prophets of the world have been excommunicated persons.* No eminent religious reformer has ever been permitted to exercise his ministry in the church in which he commenced. Slaves of creeds and hounds of the Lord never let up in their furious drives till every growing man in their obscurantist Israel is driven out.

11. But the most serious limitation of these man-made ecclesiastic documents, called creeds, is that they hopelessly block the way to Christian union. The exponents and devotees of sectarian creeds cannot convert each other to common ground, nor can they in their divisive and separated capacities, convert the world to any one of their creeds, much less to Jesus Christ who, by his saving and unifying power, makes all human creeds unnecessary.

Other reasons were given, but these are sufficient to give us an idea of the forces liberated in that discussion seventy-seven years ago, which for the most part in our day have turned these manufactured articles of faith, and wooden wares of opinion into the *innocuous desuetude* of utter harmlessness. Perhaps the best summary of the argument against creeds, and for the Bible as a sufficient rule of faith and practice, was made by one of the greatest of Mr. Campbell's students, viz:

> If a creed contains more than the Bible it contains too much; if it contains less than the Bible it contains too little; if it contains anything different from the Bible it is wrong; if it contains what the Bible contains, neither more nor less, nor anything different, it is not a creed, but the Bible.

It is quite needless for me to say, in view of all that has gone before, that Mr. Rice made no direct assault on these positions, so ably presented, amplified, and illustrated by his opponent. He dug in all right, and was by no means a bad sniper, but he seldom went over the top, to make a drive. As we have already seen, his method was not so much to dig in, as to *dig under*. He undertook to pull down the argumentative structure of his opponent by sapping and running something in the style of a California gopher. His objective, in this instance, was to make it appear that the creedlessness of the Reformers, under the leadership of Mr. Campbell, was not a workable hypothesis in the practical politics of the church. Having no authoritative creed or standard of doctrine to provide material to put a fence around his principles, to wall them in and distinguish them from the princples of other churches he had organized a new cave of Addulam, indwelt, according to his own admission, by "all sorts of men teaching all sorts of doctrine." All of Mr. Campbell's writings and the literature of the reformation as a whole, had been canvassed and ransacked to find contradictions and differences of these reforming sinnners against themselves. These

differences of opinion, among the Reformers, he rolled as a sweet morsel under his defaming tongue.

Mr. Campbell had labored faithfully to prove the doctrine of baptism for the remission of sins. Dr. Fishback denied it. Dr. Fishback held the doctrine of total hereditary depravity. Mr. Campbell and Dr. Shannon denied it, and Alylett Rains, another great preacher of the movement, said, "It is a libel on human nature of the grossest kind." Dr. Shannon believed that the scriptures are adequate to the conversion of men without any super-added spiritual influence. Mr. Rains did not believe it. After the conversion of Rains to the reformation he still maintained his old opinion of universal salvation. "And so it goes" said Mr. Rice. He had already dwelt at length on the defection of the notorious Dr. Thomas, who openly taught that man was composed of *body, blood* and *breath,* that Adam was God, the Holy Spirit electricity, and the Kingdom of God a politico-materialistic institution, to be entered by immersion regeneration, and "bossed" in the Millennium by his disciples, the Christadelphians. Barton W. Stone was represented as denying the divinity of Chirst, an old misrepresentation, but falser than old.

Mr. Rice apparently had no consciousness of the fact, not even when Mr. Campbell pointed it out to him, that these charges were the highest compliments that could be paid to the reformation. In the debate on baptism Mr. Campbell was charged with narrowness and illiberality; in the debate on creeds with latitudinarianism. He pleaded guilty to the charge of being liberal and broad enough to give latitude and leeway to differences of opinion and interpretation, in matters not affecting the essentials of life and salvation. These variations of mental attitude towards theological problems, and speculations of the schools, had no disturbing or disruptive influence on the brotherhood of the Reformers, whose distinguishing mark was an effort to keep the unity of the Spirit in

the bonds of peace. Mr. Campbell took occasion to say emphatically at an early stage of this discussion on creeds:

> It is not the object of our efforts to make men think alike on a thousand themes. Let them think as they like on any matters of human opinion and upon doctrines of religion, provided only they hold *the Head* Christ, and keep his commandments. I have learned not only the theory, but the fact, that if you wish opinionism to cease or subside you must not call up and debate everything that men think or say. You may debate anything into consequence, or, by a dignified silence, you may waste it into oblivion.

As to Thomas, M.D., his materialistic and horrible theories of God, man, and the devil, theology, prophecy, and eschatology, brought up as evidence of looseness of belief among the Disciples, and proof of the necessity for a creed in order to the detection and exposure of errorists; on the contrary, as was pointed out, the repudiation of Welch Thomas and his heresies, by the Reformers, was in reality, clear proof of the sufficiency of the scriptures for "reproof" and for "correction," as well as for "instruction in righteousness."

Mr. Rice made a point against unwritten creeds and their exclusiveness, which seems at the first glance to have been well taken, as against his opponent's theology. He said:

> But facts prove, beyond contradiction, that churches having no written creed, may be, and are, as exclusive and sectarian as any other, and as much disposed to force their opinions on others. The gentleman's own church affords us evidence, conclusive, of the truth of this remark; for without a written creed they have excommunicated more Christians than any creed in Christendom! There is no other Protestant denomination as exclusive as they.

The first part of this indictment is very true as a general proposition; but the Reformers against whom he inveighs in this soft impeachment, believed that Christians, and all Christians, were in the church, and that neither men nor angels, nor devils had either the right or the power, to put one of them out, or to keep them out. An unwritten human creed is little, if any better, than a written one; in fact they are about equally obstructive and worthless, if they contain noth-

ing but theological opinions and speculations, but the unwritten creed of Mr. Campbell's church, to which Mr. Rice refers, was not an unwritten creed or rule of faith and practice; it was written, and very much written; written a long time ago, on parchment and vellum by inspired penmen, and bound up in a volume for our use, known as the New Testament Scriptures. This creed includes some things and excludes others; it includes some people and excludes others; but neither the function of inclusion, nor of exclusion belongs to us, only the function of *submission* and *realization* comes our way. Perhaps the best conclusion of a discussion on the creed question is the following "creed for the times" which is a very striking and beautiful interpretation of the conception of religion advocated by Mr. Campbell in all his debates, especially in the last proposition of the last one, stripped of its outward dogmatic garb, which it then had to wear;

I believe in one God, present in nature as life and law; in science as truth, in art as beauty, in history as justice, in society as sympathy, in conscience as duty, and supremely in Christ as our highest ideal.

I believe in the Bible as the expression of God's will through man, in prayer as the devotion of man's will to God; and in the church as the fellowship of those who try to do God's will in the world.

I believe in worship as the highest inspiration to work; in sacrifice as the price we must pay to make right what is wrong; in salvation as growth out of selfishness into service; in eternal life as the survival of what loves and is lovable in each individual; and in judgment as the obvious fact that the condition of the gentle, the generous, the modest, the pure, and the true is always and everywhere preferable to that of the cruel, the sensual, the mean, the proud and the false.

## CHAPTER XXII

## CAMPBELL-RICE DEBATE CONCLUDED

*Last of the Big Five. "Which Whipped?" The Question Settled by the Indian Method of Counting Scalps. Debates as Contributions to Christian Union.*

Protestant England and Protestant America have, at their disposal, all the means necessary to send the gospel from pole to pole, and from the Thames or the Euphrates to the ends of the earth. They have men enough; genius, learning, talent, ships, books, money, enterprise, zeal, adequate to such a splendid scheme; if they would, in Christian faith and purity, unite in one holy effort, on the book of God, to humanize, civilize, and evangelize all the brotherhood of man. The unholy warfare of this age is inter-national, inter-sectional, inter-partizan. All the artillery—intellectual, moral, physical, is expended upon the little citadels, fortifications, and towers of partyism. It is a barbarous, uncivil, savage warfare against our own religion, against ourselves, against the common Savior, against the whole family of man.

For all these reasons, I pray for the annihilation of partyism, and of everything that, directly or indirectly, tends to keep it up; and instead of these human devices, of which I have so often spoken, these ordinances and traditions of men, I plead for the Bible, and nothing but the Bible, as the standard and rule of all our personal and social duties; our bond of union, our terms of communion, the directory and formulary of our whole church relations—faith, discipline, and government. —*Alexander Campbell.*

I close this discussion with the kindest feelings towards my opponent and his friends. My prayer is, that God, in his mercy, will hasten the day, when true Christian union—unity of the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, may universally prevail; when all the disciples of Christ shall be more nearly alike, and shall be able, more harmoniously and efficiently to co-operate in spreading over the earth the knowledge of the glorious Gospel; when they will present to the powers of darkness an unbroken phalanx. May all who bear the Christian name, build on the Rock of Ages, that they may be able to stand, when the earth shall be shaken to its centre. —*N. L. Rice.*

# CHAPTER XXII

## CAMPBELL-RICE DEBATE CONCLUDED

THIS debate in Lexington was the supreme effort of Calvinistic pædobaptists, in that community, to break the influence and stop the progress of the religious reformation, led by Alexander Campbell, which was Baptist and Arminian in its theology. Under the trip hammer blows of Campbell and Stone, and a multitude of able preachers, won from its ranks, Calvinistic pædobaptism was visibly on the decline. Its intellectual and theological strongholds had been successfully bombarded and it was about to capitulate to the opposition. Something had to be attempted, something done, to save the cause of orthodox religion to Central Kentucky. Under this conviction, in the minds of its leaders, they took the aggressive and made this great drive in this battle of the gods. Stimulated by fear of their antagonist and the consciousness of peril to their cause, they made a desperate effort to manufacture public opinion in its favor, both while the debate was going on, and after its close.

While the discussion of the Holy Spirit was under way, Mr. Campbell, in his second address, took occasion to expose the unscrupulous propaganda that had been organized against him. After referring to similar tactics in the debate with Mr. McCalla, he said:

> On the present occasion, I learn a more extended system has been got up. Runners spread the tidings abroad—letters are written to distant places; even the Presbyterian press has proclaimed all over the land a glorious victory. To the old system more thoroughly carried out, has, in this age of the march of the mind, been added a new invention. True, indeed, something like it in days of yore, seems to have occurred at Drury Lane and other London theatres, when some new actor was about to make his *debut*. In order to

stimulate his energies, and to manufacture fame, a few friends were placed in the galleries above, with a previous understanding when to clap, express their plaudits, and to encore his performances. As an improvement, I learn a laughing committee has been organized with a clerical bugleman, at whose signal certain persons are to smile a little broad, and thus encourage my worthy friend! I have, indeed, in these particulars, been somewhat disappointed. My pædobaptist friends have rather gone ahead of all my past experiences and expectations.

Two years after the oral debate, when the Presbyterians were still boasting of a great victory Mr. Campbell published the following in the *Millennial Harbinger,* which was certainly a better test of victory than the foolish tactics he had exposed while the debate was in progress.

An occurrence at Nashville sets this argument in a fair light. I once had a public talk there with the late Obadiah Jennings, D.D., which Presbyterians manufactured into a great debate, in which of course, I was, as usual, gloriously defeated. The city rang with Presbyterial acclamations for some ten days; when an aged citizen accosted one of the boasters in the following style: "You Presbyterians have gained, you say, a glorious victory. How do you know when you have gained a victory? I do not understand how you ascertain a victory? Do tell me how you know when you beat? I will tell you how, in old times, we counted victories when I was engaged in Indian wars. After the battle was over we counted the scalps. Those were said to have conquered who could count the largest number of scalps taken from the enemy. Now, since Mr. Campbell has been here, he has immersed some thirty, amongst whom were the most intelligent citizens of Nashville. How many have you added to your church by this debate?" "I have not heard of any," said his Presbyterian friend. "Pray then, my dear sir, tell me, how you know when you have gained a great victory?"

Boasts of this kind, by heated partizans, amount to nothing, unless "scalps" come in to make good the claim. It had passed into a sarcasm, if not into a joke, that each side to a controversy, is absolutely certain that the other side is in the wrong. Of course, men would not be men, and human nature would be some other kind of nature, if this were not so. Scalps, as tangible tokens and signs of victory, were not confined to In-

dian wars—a metaphorical application of the term to converts from the other side, and conviction carried to the disinterested intelligence of the community outside was the standard of success in a public debate, and this visible test of the acid variety, invariably followed the debates of Alexander Campbell, and most others held by his brethren. Notably in this debate with Rice, "scalps" piled up around the feet of his opponent while the conflict was still raging. When Mr. Campbell preached on the interval Sundays, numbers of persons presented themselves for baptism. Amongst these a well known Lutheran minister, named McChestney, who was the graduate of a college, and also of a pædobaptist theological seminary, situated, by the way, on what became the battle field of Gettysburg, the decisive battle of our Civil War. Mr. Rice made little of this occurrence by representing that Mr. McChestney had been convinced before and saved up for the occasion, to help his opponent out of a hard place. Brother McChestney, who became a prominent preacher and pastor among the Disciples, sent up this note which Mr. Campbell read to the audience.

> I never said that I had not changed my course on the subject of infant baptism since I have been here. Many of the sentiments held by the advocates of the reformation I have long held and taught; but on the subject of infant baptism, I have changed my course since I have been here, and in consequence of this debate.

Partizanship, however blind, is always sincere. There is no doubt about the sincerity of the Presbyterian belief in the certainty that their cause had triumphed, as shown by the eagerness with which the Rev. J. H. Brown, the man who held the long correspondence with Mr. Campbell arranging the propositions to be discussed, purchased for $2000 the copyright of the printed debate, and, in the efforts made, for some time, to circulate it. As to the outcome of the strenuosity of Presbyterians to give the work an adequate circulation, a contemporary, familiar with the facts thus testifies:

It was soon found, however, that the effect of the *printed* discussion upon the public mind was quite different, from what the party expected, and they were mortified to perceive that it was making many converts to Mr. Campbell's views, but none to Presbyterianism. Upon this Mr. Brown gladly disposed of his copyright, for a small sum, to a member of the Christian Church at Jacksonville, Ill., C. D. Roberts, who immediately printed a large edition of the work, which has been since patronized and circulated by the Reformers. Results have shown that whatever personal distinction or notoriety the debate may have given to Mr. Rice, it certainly added nothing to Presbyterianism, which, in Kentucky continued still to decline, while that of the Reformation steadily prospered.

This bulky volume of more than 900 pages, notwithstanding the scholastic and critical character of a portion of its contents, was extensively read and intensively influential in settling the issues in dispute, in *thinking* circles. The facts and arguments were repeated in hundreds of debates, oral and written, throughout the English speaking world, and in numberless sermons, adding hundreds of churches, and thousands of converts to the cause of Reformation; and paradoxical, as it may sound, made a fundamental and far-reaching contribution to the cause of peace and Christian union.

Errors and obstacles in the way of unity, received a fatal blow in this decisive battle, and as in the case of all other decisive conflicts, time, and many other engagements were required, to bring home the fact to the dull and slow-moving consciousness of the people at large. Only a few individual instances, out of many, can be given here, as specimen converts, by reading the debate. Col. Thos. H. Nelson, formerly United States minister to Mexico, and afterward to Chili, said at Terre Haute, Ind., in 1888.

I was a young lawyer at Lexington, Ky., and attended the Campbell and Rice debates. I was a Presbyterian. When I heard the debate I thought Mr. Rice got the better of Mr. Campbell; I purchased the debate when published, and have since decided that Mr. Campbell was a giant beside the ordinary Mr. Rice. Even now when I want an intellectual stimulus I take down "the Campbell and Rice Debate" and read Mr. Campbell's masterful arguments.

A Mrs. Postlethwaite, of Greensburg, Pa., a woman of culture and calibre and undoubted moral fibre, after reading the book three times went from the closed book to the open baptistry, and, by the authority of the Lord Christ, was immersed into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Her case was an extraordinary one. She was the relict of Dr. Postlethwaite, an elder of high repute in the Presbyterian Church, of which she herself had been a member in good standing and full fellowship for more than fifty years. Her environment was as inimical to an unprejudiced reading, as her biased mental attitude at the beginning. She was at the home of her son-in-law, a Presbyterian clergyman, with all her associations orthodox, of a peculiarly rigid type of current Presbyterianism. After the first reading she felt that Mr. Rice had sustained himself fairly well but wondered why he had not answered Mr. Campbell's arguments in a more satisfactory way than he seemed able to do. A second reading brought the conviction that his arguments had not been answered because they were not answerable. She laid down the book at the end of the third reading ashamed and disgusted at the disingenuousness and unfairness of Rice, with the unshakable conviction, doubly confirmed, that one side was contending for important truths and the other for moth grown human institutions and traditions.

In 1846 Mr. Campbell received a letter from an intelligent official of the Methodist church in Nashville, and this also is a very remarkable instance. Said he:

> I commenced to read the debate between you and Rev. N. L. Rice, some twelve months ago, with prejudices decidedly, for the most part, in favor of the views entertained by the latter, but by the time I had finished I was fully convinced that Mr. Rice had utterly failed to sustain his positions. Yet I was not fully satisfied that the doctrine for which you contended was true. It was a clear case, to my mind, that your arguments, for the most part, were conclusive—that you had gained a complete triumph over Mr. Rice; but yet I was fearful that your *premises* might somewhere be defective,

and, to be honest, I had a kind of a secret wish that it might be so! I did not, some how or other, like, after living in the Methodist Episcopal Church for some fourteen years, sustaining too, as I did an official relation to that church, to give up my long cherished opinions. Still, I determined, after making a fair test of your views, to fall upon the side of the truth, should it even be what I was pleased, in common with many others, to call "Campbellism." I, therefore, with earnest inquiry after God's revealed truth, fled to the Bible, and read it with greater care and solicitude, if possible, than I had ever done before. The result of this was a confirmation of my already partial conviction of the truth of your position. I found that what I had supposed to be Campbellism was God's own revealed truth. Under this conviction, about the 24th of last May, in Franklin County, Kentucky, I was immersed, after which I became a member of the Christian Church. Is not my case, with many others similar, a demonstration of the (Shall I say?) omnipotence of truth? When I commenced reading the debate, to which I have alluded, my prejudices were unreasonable against yourself, and what I then considered exclusively your doctrine; but the truth—the unsophisticated truth, as contended for by yourself and confirmed by the Bible—proved sufficiently strong to conquer that monster prejudice.

But the "scalp" that gave to Mr. Campbell, the greatest personal satisfaction was that of his uncle Archibald Campbell of Newry, Ireland, several of whose children who had emigrated to the United States, and had fallen in line with the reformatory views of their illustrious cousin. Amongst these was the well known Enos Campbell, a man of high standing as teacher and advocate of the reformation. The father Archbald continued to maintain his Presbyterian sentiments, and to act as an elder of the Presbyterian sesession church at Newry, an office he had filled for more than fifty years. At length in May, 1846, he thus wrote to his nephew Alexander:

I read your debate with Mr. Rice, through the medium of your Dungannon friends. I consider him a much more wily antagonist than either McCalla or Walker. I would not be surprised if the popular cry would be in his favor. He seems to have the tact of making the most of everything that might appear in his favor. * * But, notwithstanding his ingenuity and wiles I am constrained to give up infant baptism as being apostolical.

Mr. Campbell in commenting on the letter said this:

> Coming from such a source from one who has often, during twenty years, objected to my views on this subject and corresponded with me in defense, not only of infant baptism, but of the differential peculiarities of Presbyterians, and one of the most learned and influential elders of that church in the North of Ireland—I regard as a very great triumph. Such a man's testimony with me, weighs more than many thousands.

At the time of this debate the Presbyterian Church, in Kentucky, numbered 8,000 members and 80 ministers. The Reformers—the combined forces of Campbell and Stone—only ten or twelve years old as a separate movement—had 40,000 members and a corresponding number of preachers. It was the superb ability and preternatural activity of these Reformers, as spiritual scalp takers, that brought on the decisive battle of this ecclesiastical war. The combined Calvinism and pædo baptism of the Presbyterians caused them to be pre-eminent scalp losers of the crisis in that period of religious and polemic history. The debate, as we have seen, made bad matters much worse for them. The decline continued at a more rapid pace than before, and in less than a quarter of a century, the great and flourishing and influential Transylvania University, passed to the Reformers, and ever since, has been the strongest center in the world of reformation and Christian union propaganda.

The first effects of a debate, like the immediate consequences of a battle, seem to be bad and only bad. When Wolfe scaled the heights of Quebec, at the cost of his own life, and that of the commander in chief on the other side, and thousands of both armies lay stretched on the fields of blood, there were no mitigating circumstances, apparently, between the tragic situation and the lower regions. But that sanguinary struggle, on these Canadian heights, made the United States a Protestant nation, and the new civilization safe for democracy. Waterloo and Gettysburg, in their first results, were unmistakable irruptions from the pit; but in the long view, the first dated a new birth for civilization in Europe, and the last

marked the preservation of the American Union, and the emancipation of four million slaves.

These religious debates of which I have been writing, and others like them, appeared in a short view to make bad matters worse. As a first result, instead of doing away with creeds, lessening sectarianism, mitigating prejudice, bigotry, and fanaticism, all were intensified and multiplied. The community was set by the ears, and the two parties, for months after the debate, to avoid meeting their neighbors and former friends face to face, walked on opposite sides of the street. But time and the providence of God have worked wonders, in the matter of these old dogmatic tests of a Christian. When these disputatious peoples, after their fierce theological set-tos, had a little time to cool off, they commenced to think —and people will not *think* until they are *bumped* and *jarred* into it—they were driven to reflection and investigation. They went, perforce, to their Bibles, like our Methodist friend, just mentioned. When you can get a man into the Book as an earnest seeker after truth, you can safely leave the consequences to take care of themselves. He will come out at the right place. These good Presbyterian people, as we have already had occasion to note, who fought so bitterly and fiercely for their denominational creed, in the great debate with Alexander Campbell have been the first people to revise their creed, and they have practically revised its objectionable features out of existence and into harmony with the universal love of God, preached by Campbell and Stone in days of yore. And, still more marvelous to relate, these people who resisted Mr. Campbell's conception of organic Christian union to the last ditch in the battle of Lexington, have been the first to get there, in fact they have beaten Mr. Campbell's own people to it! Thus debates, which seemed at first to be the greatest of possible hindrances to the unity of the people of God, have turned out in the long view to be the greatest of its providential helpers.

## CHAPTER XXIII

## AFTERMATH OF THE GREAT DEBATES

*The Friendly Personal Relations between Alexander Campbell and His Two Greatest Opponents, Robert Owen and Bishop Purcell.*

Should I find a pædobaptist more intelligent in the Christian Scriptures, more spiritually-minded and more devoted to the Lord than a Baptist, or one immersed on a profession of the ancient faith, I could not hesitate a moment in giving the preference of my heart to him that loveth most. Did I act otherwise, I would be a pure sectarian, a Pharisee among Christians. Still I will be asked, How do I know that anyone loves my Master but by his obedience to his commandment? I answer, In no other way. But mark, I do not substitute obedience to one commandment, for universal or even for general obedience. And should I see a sectarian Baptist or a pædobaptist more spiritually-minded, more generally conformed to the requisitions of the Messiah, than one who precisely acquiesces with me in the theory or practice of immersion as I teach, doubtless the former rather than the latter, would have my cordial approbation and love as a Christian. So I judge, and so I feel. It is the image of Christ the Christian looks for and loves; and this does not consist in being exact in a few items, but in general devotion to the whole truth as far as known.

—*Alexander Campbell, in the famous "Lunenburg Letter."*

## CHAPTER XXIII

### AFTERMATH OF THE GREAT DEBATES

THE warmth of friendship and mutual appreciation of the great disputants, after the debates, was in inverse ratio of their differences. The nearer together in convictions concerning the fundamentals, the farther apart in friendly relations afterwards. The more widely sundered in opinions and principles, the closer together in ties of personal friendship. This is a strange fact, from the point of view of Christian idealism, but a familiar phenomenon to students of psychology. If Mr. Campbell and his three evangelical opponents had any kind of regard or affection or kindly appreciation of each other, it does not appear in the records of history, as far as my knowledge extends. But the way Mr. Campbell and his other two opponents, the infidel and the Roman Catholic, spoke of their regards for each other, is one of the most touching and beautiful things in human history.

In 1847, four years after the debate with Rice, when Mr. Campbell was passing through New York on his way to England, he was much gratified by a call from Robert Owen, who, with the most perfect courtesy and kind feeling, inquired after Mr. Campbell's family, and particularly after his father, for whom he had a peculiar regard. In speaking of the interview, Mr. Campbell remarked, as he had done on many occasions before, that "of all his opponents in debate the infidel Robert Owen, was the most candid, fair, and gentlemanly disputant he had ever met." As this was the last time he ever saw Mr. Owen it may be here stated that the latter afterward finally returned to England, and, as related in a biographical sketch published after his death, con-

tinued to be noted for his amiability, being still as has been written of him:

> The same placid happy being, in his old age, believing and expecting whatever he wished; always gentlemanly and courteous in his manners; always on the most endearing terms with his children, who loved to make him, as they said, "the very happiest old man in the world," always a gentle love in regard to his dogmas and his expectations; always palpably right in his descriptions of human misery; always thinking he had proved a thing when he had asserted it in the force of his own convictions; always meaning something more rational than he had actually expressed. It was said by way of mockery, that he might live in a parallelogram, but he argued in circles, but this is too favorable a description of one who did not argue at all, nor know what argument meant. His mind never fairly met any other, though at the close of his life he had a strange idea that it did by means of spirit rappings. He published sundry conversations held in that way with Benjamin Franklin and other people, and in the very same breath in which he insisted on the reality of these conversations he insisted that the new found power was "all electricity." He lived until his 89th year and died in November, 1857, at Newton, in Wales, the place of his birth to which he had gone on a visit.

But the world was not done with good and gentle Robert Owen. He came back from the other side and had his picture "took." Alfred Russell Wallace, coadjutor with Darwin in the discovery and development of the law of natural selection, and a more brilliant man than Darwin, in his remarkable book on *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism* tells the story of materialization and spirit photography of which he was an eye witness. At a seance, held in London, about ten years after the death of Robert Owen, a well known photographer of the city being present with his photographic apparatus, the medium pointed to a small table in the room, and said there are two old men standing there. They were not visible to the spectators. The photographer pointed his camera in the direction indicated, took a snap shot, which when the negative was developed, turned out to be two excellent likenesses of Lord Brougham and Robert Owen, rec-

ognized and identified by all present who had known these gentlemen in life. Russell Wallace the great man of science declares that these pictures were still in existence when his book was written, in the early seventies. So that Mr. Campbell's good old friend, under the leadership of his brilliant son Robert Dale Owen, not only gave up his atheism and materialism, and died, not in the sure and certain hope of immortality, but in the sure and certain knowledge, as he believed, of the great life beyond.

*The Christian-Evangelist* of September, 1898 published a remarkable interview with Archbishop Purcell, by a writer who signs himself "I. C." Recently in the office of the paper, all the available forces, with the writer, put our heads together to cipher out the identity of the author, but we failed. However, in conversation with J. H. McNeil, pastor of the Christian Church at Winchester, Ky., where these lines are written, by dint of his knowledge and a little higher criticism, the problem, I believe, was solved. The highly interesting conversation that follows, took place between Gov. Ira D. Chase, of Indiana, who was also a Christian preacher, and Archbishop Purcell, the Holy See having trans-mogrified the Bishop Purcell who debated with Alexander Campbell into Archbishop Purcell, as a reward for his services in defending the Holy Mother Church. Governor Chase was a past master of this kind of reporting, and always signed his interviews "I. C." These are marvellous words spoken by the Archbishop and lead us to say if there are many Purcells in the Roman church, who hold this conception of the Christian religion; who thus discriminate between the accidental and the essential elements of Christianity, the reunion of Christendom, including Rome is now within the sphere of practical politics. This is what was said:

> After the conversation had run on in this manner for some time, the idea occurred to me to talk to His Grace about Mr. Campbell. So I boldly broached the subject and said: "Bishop, I am aware

that you were once engaged in a debate with the greatest reformer of the nineteenth century, and one of the greatest men of any age."

"Oh!" said he, "you allude to Mr. Campbell, of course."

I said, "Yes, he is the man."

"Now," I went on, "I have, Bishop, many friends in Mr. Campbell's church who are persons of sterling worth and noble character, who would like very much to hear your opinion of that gentleman, of his work and his place in the history of the Christian Church and amongst the intellectual giants of the Protestant Reformation."

"Certainly," he responded, "I will gladly talk with you about my worthy friend, Mr. Campbell. From the very first day of our acquaintance to the day of his death, I always entertained the kindliest feelings toward that gentleman. Oh! he was a most lovable character, indeed, and treated me in every way and on all occasions like a brother." Here the good man's eyes sparkled as he added:

"Was he not my brother in the Lord? Was he not like me a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus? Did he not believe in the resurrection of the dead and of the life beyond the grave where we shall meet to part no more? Did he not kneel before the same cross, in spirit and regard, with reverence the Mother of Jesus and that poor woman who bathed his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and of those other sweet and pious women who followed the great Master in his journeyings over the classic hills of Judea and knelt beside his body when taken down from the cross and placed in his narrow tomb?"

"It is true, we differed in some matters—for instance, on church government, prayers for the departed, confessions of sin to the priest, the celibacy of the clergy—what of that? These were all minor matters. In the essentials of Christianity we entirely agreed.

"In Mr. Campbell's church the form of worship is very simple, as in the days of the apostles. He hoped always to keep it so. Here is where he was mistaken. It cannot be kept so. As the church becomes great in numbers, and rich and strong, it will lose its original simplicity. This is inevitable. We begin to see the change already in some of the richer congregations in the cities. Are not the advanced congregations already discarding congregational singing, and procuring fine organs and hired choirs? Are they not placing soft and luxurious cushions in their seats, and placing flowers in the pulpits and in the altars? Has not fine stained glass found its way into the lofty windows of their truly Gothic cathedrals? Surely, all these things have taken place, and very shortly they'll have representation of the apostles and the saints in these same windows, and fine frescoed ceilings, with scenes from sacred Scriptures represented thereon, as we have in the Sistine Chapel at Rome.

"I do not think that the Christian Church will introduce into their worship our incense-throwing, or our scarlet robes, or many other things that are peculiar to the Church of Rome. We have been many centuries in introducing all these forms into our worship. The church of Mr. Campbell is not one hundred years old. It is yet in its infancy, and a very lively brat, it is, too! What forms it will adopt in its manner of worship in the future, what changes it will inaugurate in the next five hundred years, no one can tell. As I before intimated, the magnificant ritual of the Church of Rome has been the creation of ages and ages, until now it is as perfect, as imposing, and as impressive as it can possibly be made.

"Now, in the Jewish Church the same struggle is going on between the Reform Jews and the Orthodox. One represents the time of Moses and Joshua, the other modern civilization, science and progress. There is an irreconcilable conflict between these two wings of Judaism. Which will dominate? Of course, the more advanced. It is a case of the survival of the fittest and the wisest. So in the Christian Church. One section is opposed to choirs, fine music, splendid churches. The other just the reverse. One I call the backwoods church, the other the church of progress and of high moral and aesthetic culture. Now, I contend that the church is drifting, drifting away from the apostolic simplicity of which its founder dreamed, and has joined in the race which all Protestant churches are making toward something grander and more majestic.

"Do not imagine that I am saying that the church is losing any of its distinctive features—any of its fundamental doctrines. It has merely added something to them to make them more elegant and more attractive."

Said I, "Bishop, what do you think of the debate between Campbell and Rice?"

"Oh, as to that," said he, "I have never read the debate. It was very lengthy, you might say tedious. It ran through seventeen consecutive days, and each party claimed the victory, of course. One of the grand features of the debate was the presence of Henry Clay as a moderator. We Catholics felt no interest in the points at issue between these gentlemen. Take baptism, for instance, a subject on which both churches were very much exercised. We Romanists believe in the great, essential, absolute importance of the holy rite of baptism. In our church it is a sacrament like marriage. Beyond this we don't go one step. We care nothing about the style of baptism or the manner of administering it. We sprinkle, we pour, we immerse. We do precisely what the person to be baptized insists on. We generally sprinkle because it is most convenient.

"Pending the long debate between these two really great men my prayers were daily lifted up for Mr. Campbell. In his discussions

with our clergy he had always been kind, affable, courteous; Rice quite the reverse. One was a gentleman; as to the other, what shall I say of him?"

"Bishop, how about your debate with Campbell?"

"Well, that only lasted a few days. Everything was conducted in decency and order, as St. Paul would say. Campbell was decidedly the very fairest man in debate I ever saw, as fair as you can possibly conceive. He never fought for victory, like Dr. Johnson. He seemed to be always fighting for the truth, or what he believed to be the truth. In this he differed from other men. He never misrepresented his case nor that of his opponent; never tried to hide a weak point; never quibbled. He would have made a very poor lawyer, in the ordinary understanding of the term lawyer. Like his great friend, Henry Clay, he excelled in the clear statement of the case at issue. No dodging with him. He came right out fairly and squarely. He was what used to be called, in good old times, 'flat-footed.' Rather than force a victory by underhand or ignoble means, he preferred to encounter defeat. But whenever he fell, he fell like the Cavalier Bayard, with honor and a clear conscience.

"In our debate not a particle of ill-feeling or bitterness was mixed up. After the discussions were over we would meet and be just as friendly as if we both belonged to one and the same church. Oh, how I should like to have met this dear son of God socially and in private life, after age had whitened our locks and mellowed our tempers and dispositions!"

I said, "Bishop, what think you of his work?"

"Well," he said, "we Catholics do not think much of a church until it has existed fully a century. It must have passed its hundredth annual milestone. Hardly has this church seen its seventy-fifth birthday. But it is a lusty youth, and has certainly distanced all its rivals in the race for popular favor. Not even the Methodists, with their efficient itineracy and their sensational methods of worship, can hold their own with the Christian Church in the fierce struggle for proselytes and for supremacy. I see no signs of weakness, of decay of decreptitude in this organization. Quite the contrary. It appears to be gathering new hope and courage and strength with each successive decade. Should this progress continue for the next quarter of a century, who will say what gigantic proportions it will assume? It has already passed away beyond the wildest dreams and hopes and expectations of its founder.

"Now as for Mr. Campbell's standing in future ages, I think it is quite within the bounds of truth to say that not ecclesiastical history alone, but profane history, will place him on the same pedestal with Luther and Calvin and Wesley, the peer of either

of them. Had he lived in the early ages of Christendom and accomplished the wonderful amount of good with which he is justly credited he would after death have been sanctified and canonized and "enrolled in the calendar" along with St. Chrysostom and St. Jerome as a father in the church, his name forever embalmed in its annals as a worthy successor of St. Peter and St. Paul. But alas! he missed these high honors by being born too late in the history of the world and in a prosaic age when money and power are more valued than piety and goodness and greatness."

The Hon. J. M. Sandusky, a lawyer of Liberty, Mo., who was born in the Blue Grass and educated in Kentucky University, sends me a good point on Henry Clay as Moderator of the Campbell and Rice debate:

I learned of Henry Clay's presiding at the Campbell and Rice Debate a few years ago in B. Glick's second hand book store at Kansas City. I picked up a volume, which I saw contained this debate, and opening the book at the first page, I saw that Henry Clay presided over the discussion along with Raccoon John Smith (it was Col. Speed Smith) and some other person I do not remember. I was impressed by the fact of Mr. Clay being chosen as presiding moderator, and Mr. Glick, who was a quaint and interesting character, coming along about that time, I said to him, "Mr. Glick, this volume contains the religious debate between Alexander Campbell and Nathan L. Rice, and I see that Henry Clay was presiding moderator at the debate." "Is that so?" he said. "Well," he continued, "I should have thought Henry Clay could have made a much better judge of a horse race or good whiskey than a religious debate."

There was a tradition that persisted to my day in Lexington, to the effect that Henry Clay was immersed soon after the close of the debate. If this is so, and I have never seen it denied, then it follows that the great commoner was a better judge of religious debates than this gentleman would seem to have been willing to admit.

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